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MEMORIES: WISE AND OTHERWISE

THE RT. HON.
SIR HENRY ROBINSON
Bart., K.C.B.

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"Good-bye": King Edward leaving Kylemore

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Memories: Wise and Otherwise .

By The Rt. Hon.
SIR HENRY ROBINSON, BART., K.C.B.

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Dedicated

to the

STAFF OF THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT BOARD

1898–1922

Whose loyal support and unsparing efforts to
assist me at all times
gave me a feeling of confidence and security in emergencies
which made my official responsibilities easy to fulfil
and pleasant to recall.

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Introduction

AS the old Local Government Board for Ireland and I, its last Vice-President, passed out of official existence together, I have thought that some record of the final eventful years of local government administration might be of interest to those with whom I have worked and been associated.

I have never had much leisure for studying the psychology of the Irish problem. I began my official life during a period of grave unrest and ended it in the midst of open rebellion, and although the years between have been comparatively free from disturbances, they have been so crowded with reforms, industrial and administrative, and so characterized by sudden and violent changes of policy under the successive Chief Secretaries of each new administration, that there seems to have been no break in the perpetual high pressure which has always been the lot of the Local Government Board.

I always promised myself that when I had passed through the troubled waters of these years to a peaceful anchorage, I would find time to look back from the far edge of life and write something of all the happenings which had affected my fate and made my intimate association with twenty Chief

Secretaries so full of interest, and I thought that this opportunity had come when I was about to signalize my freedom from official shackles by a long sea voyage in April 1922.

But the sea voyage never helped me to put a line to paper. On the contrary, the enthralling experience in the 7,000-ton Booth liner and the wonders of the mighty Amazon drowned every thought of Ireland, past, present and future, till it seemed like a dream of another world.

I excused myself for this failure to take advantage of a great opportunity with the reflection that the delay would probably enable me to close my book with a description of how the country had at last settled its differences, and was happily engaged in working out its destiny as a Free State.

This hope is not yet fulfilled and I have had to write under great disadvantages, for all my notes for the book and my private papers were destroyed when my house was looted in August 1922.

Many of my best photographs have been destroyed, but amongst those which escaped were some snapshots given me by the late Countess of Dudley when I was with the Viceregal party on the occasion of King Edward's journey through Connemara, and these illustrate some of the incidents of His Majesty's visit which I have described.

Memories: Wise and Otherwise

CHAPTER I

AN EXCITING JOURNEY

HOW well I remember the fog and gloom of Broadstone Station on that cold December night in 1879 when I first launched out upon my career as temporary inspector of the Local Government Board in charge of the distressed districts of Mayo and Galway.

My first mission was a pressing and a hurried one. I had only received my appointment that day, having arrived in Dublin in the morning from London by the night mail, after a sleepless night and a Channel crossing in a gale of wind.

I was dog-tired and the prospect of another night journey across Ireland with a forty-two miles car-drive at the end of it, over the most desolate road in the kingdom, would have been dismal enough were it not that nothing could have damped the elation caused by the fact that I had got an opening in the public service and a career was before me to make or mar.

Sleep, however, was the most important thing for me at the moment, and I was assured by the

experienced traveller I had succeeded in the western district that a tip to the guard before the train started and the surrender of my ticket to him would secure my carriage from intrusion at wayside stations, and I would be able to sleep uninterruptedly till I reached Ballina.

In my improved financial position I felt quite the grand seigneur, and overdid the tip to a degree which utterly overwhelmed the guard, who marched me with solemn steps and upright deportment to a carriage, locked me in, and loudly assured me of his determination to keep my presence inviolate from all other travellers of any degree.

He certainly kept his promise, and an unfortunate porter who was trying my door for a commercial gentleman at the first stop, was swept aside with an infuriated "Come ower that, blast ye!" from my protector.

After this episode his solicitation for me, very real though it was, entirely missed its mark so far as I was concerned, as at succeeding stations he would throw open the door to the blinding storm and blaze his lamp in my eyes for the purpose of giving information about our progress and whereabouts which was of no interest to me whatever. "This is Knockcrochery," he would bellow at me, waking me out of a heavy sleep. "No change, y'ere right where y'are. It's turning to snow so it is." And then the door would be banged, to be opened again an hour later when utter fatigue had enabled me to overcome the hard corners of the carriage and get to sleep again, with the news shrieked at me through the storm

that this was Claremorris and I "needn't stir at all" and he had my bag all right in the van.

At one station there was an appalling crash, and I thought my official career in the Local Government Board was going to be the shortest on record, but my genial comforter was at hand, and flinging the door open, "We're going to shunt now," he announced, leaning over me confidentially, with his clothes dripping snow and wet all over me. "Ye can get out and shlip into the station-master's office if ye like, only ye'd be desthroyed with the could there, and it's betther for ye to stop where y'are."

Never was a tip conferred with such lamentable consequences to the tipper or more conscientiously earned by the recipient.

Ballina at 3 a.m., snowing, dark and miserable. "There's a power o' weather outside," said the sleepy porter, taking my portmanteau through the gloomy, half-lighted station, where he handed it to a huge muffler and a sou'wester that answered to the name of Martin. There might have been a man connected with it, but I saw no signs of his face. The sou'wester and muffler was in charge of a car, and having tied the portmanteau on it we proceeded to get under weigh. "Will she shtart, Martin?" said the sleepy porter dubiously. "She might then," said a voice rather hopelessly from inside the muffler. But she wouldn't, and it seemed as if nothing short of a steam crane would move her. Fortunately there was a small stack of turf outside a cottage on the roadside, and by dint of opening a fierce bombardment on her from both

sides of the road with sods of turf "she" suddenly started at a gallop with my portmanteau to the hotel, where we found her awaiting us when we arrived, panting on foot, a few minutes later.

"Ye'll get a good warrum at the coffee-room fire here," said Martin, banging away at the door of the "Moy," and presently the door was opened by a most extraordinary creature in his shirt and trousers, with an enormous head, no neck, and a face like a frog; altogether he was like one of those scorpion creatures one sees bottled in spirits in museums.

And a very amiable scorpion he was, too. He dived into corners of the room and got sticks in one place, turf in another, then went down on his hands and knees and sent a terrific blast from his huge mouth into the heart of the fire that nothing human could have accomplished; then he boiled water and made tea, and by this time the fire was a perfect furnace, before which I dozed till the scorpion rushed in and roared, "She's to!" and the twanging of the horn indicated that the long car for Belmullet was not only put to, but was impatient.

It is strange how vivid one's memory sometimes keeps of incidents of no moment or importance whatever, but I remember as if it were yesterday that night journey.

An awful night, blowing hard, dark as pitch and cold as charity. There was one man on my side of the car and on the other there were three; their conversation was loud and hilarious, and one of them, a certain Misther Carolan, who "had

drink taken," was repeatedly adjudged by his companions " to bet out the divil " by his irritating failure to remain on the car when it turned a corner. Four times we stopped to pick up Mr. Carolan after his headers off the car, before we were clear of the town. Thereafter, whenever turning a corner or about to descend a hill the driver always bellowed a premonitory admonition to " hold yer hoult on Misther Carolan."

Newtowngore village was sleeping peacefully as we passed by, and the most sober of Mister Carolan's companions took the small leather mail-bag and gave it a mighty twirl to pitch it over the ditch and padlocked gate to the door of the post office, but letting go his hold at the wrong moment it flew up straight and high and caught on a slender extended bough of a tall tree.

" Howly Paul, what'll we do now ? " said the driver.

" Arrah ! no matther, lave it so," said his friend ; " sure the postmisthress'll see it in the morning and go up and take it down."

" She might then," agreed the driver, " only for her being eighty years of age."

" Well, no matter," said the friend ; " sure she has her daughter, a lady's-maid out of Dublin, stopping with her. Come on now."

The driver was still unconvinced, as he feared that a lady's-maid might be " out of the way of climbing threes."

" Well, let ye get up now," he said at last. " I'll be passing back this way to-morrow, and if she hasn't seen it we'll peg stones at it for her."

The actors in all this were quite invisible. All I could see was the great grey wheeler lit up by the full glare of the lamp, looking like some ghostly wraith of a horse amidst the steam from his breath and body. As we drove on and the lamps threw a light on the passing trees they seemed to bob into life suddenly over the walls and hedges and thrust out their shapeless, ghostly arms at us and then disappear into the darkness again.

Soon a terribly heavy hailstorm arose and continued for an hour. By the time this was over and I could look up, the dawn had broken and everything looked grey, cheerless and realistic.

Mr. Carolan and his companions had gone. The phantom wheeler looked a sorry old hack; the trees stood up sedate and dignified, and no one would have suspected them of their ghostly pranks of the night before.

CHAPTER II

MY FIRST APPOINTMENT

BEFORE plunging headlong into the crowded memories of bygone days it is necessary to explain how I came to be associated with Irish administration at all, and how it happened that, after studying to read up for the home Civil Service, I entered it by the back door, so to speak, without passing any examination, and climbed up the front stairs till I found myself on the roof. This, I fear, must unavoidably be a rather egotistical narrative, and readers are advised to skip it and pass on to the next chapter.

My father had a strong belief that trade represented the only road to independence and wealth, so at the age of seventeen he put me into a large merchant's office in London, where I was paid no salary and worked from 9 a.m. till 6 p.m. and till midnight on foreign mail nights. The firm were commission agents, buying and selling for merchants all over the world, and occasionally doing a gamble in cargoes of wool or timber on the high seas.

I became private secretary to one of the chiefs in about eighteen months, but shortly afterwards the firm made heavy losses in foreign trade and suspended payment, and I found myself free, after having put in two strenuous years of City work.

The work had been so constant, the hours so long and the holidays so short, that by comparison all the posts I held for the next few years seemed more or less of a holiday.

I saw enough of City work to realize that, without capital or family connexion with merchants, the City was no place for the likes of me, and I returned home meaning to work for the upper division of the Civil Service. Then my luck began to manifest itself, and thereafter to streak all over my official life.

A commission to inquire into the taxation of towns in Ireland had just started operations, and the secretary was a young officer home from India on leave—some connexion of the chairman. He had no business training, no bump of order, he lost papers, he could not speak or write intelligible letters, and made so desperate a mess of the evidence and correspondence, that it was rather a relief to the commissioners when he took sick and resigned. The chairman asked Mr. T. H. Burke, the under-secretary, to find a man to act as secretary, and he promised to do so; but in the meantime as the need was urgent he sent me over for a week to give a helping hand in restoring order till another secretary could be found. It was child's play to me after the strict regime of the London office, and when my week was up the commissioners would not hear of my leaving, so I stayed with them till they presented their report a year later. I then thought of resuming work for the Civil Service examination, but my lucky comet was again in the sky, as a new commission was just then appointed to inquire

into Poor Law and Lunacy administration. The commissioners were located in the old offices of the Local Taxation Commission and the chairman was advised to take me on as secretary, as by this time I knew Ireland pretty well. I visited every Poor Law union in Ireland with the new commissioners, and before a month had elapsed after the completion of their report my luck was again to the fore, as a commission was appointed to report upon Municipal Boundaries, and I was offered the secretaryship and subsequently became a commissioner, though only twenty-three years of age.

It was when winding up this last commission that the following extraordinary coincidence happened which started me on my career in the Local Government Board.

The year 1879 was an appalling one for the small farmers in Ireland. Their livestock was unsaleable, their potatoes a total failure, they were in arrears with their rents, heavily in debt to the shopkeepers, and as they had no fixity of tenure they could not obtain credit for as much as a loaf of bread.

The Land League agitation was then at its height, and the Government believed that the harrowing stories of distress were untrustworthy and were mainly a feature of the agitation.

I was in Galway late in the year 1879 and was spending a week-end at Recess, when I happened to take up a Dublin newspaper in which there was an article describing the famine and starvation in some mountain villages near by, and which

declared that some infatuation must be paralysing the Government. I met a young priest—Father John Connolly—and in course of conversation referred to these newspaper reports and premised that they were grossly exaggerated.

"Come with me to-morrow into the mountains," he said, "and I'll learn ye whether they are exaggerated or not; that is, if ye don't mind a six-mile walk over the wet bogs."

I was glad of the experience, so we started off early next day for a mountain village called Derryvoreda. I never got such a shock before or since. The people were living skeletons, their faces like parchment. They were scarcely able to crawl. Even the few pigs and fowls were hardly able to stand, and so far as I could see there was not a house with any food in it. It was appalling. I urged the priest to send a special messenger for a relieving officer, who would get them into the workhouse and give them temporary relief till they could be removed. He promised to do so, but believed they would die at home rather than enter the workhouse.

I then wrote my first letter to the under-secretary—Tom Burke—who had asked me to drop him a line as to how I found things were in the west, and told him exactly what I had seen, giving him the names of the people I had visited.

It so happened the newspaper article had been sent for a report to the Local Government inspector in Galway—a rather delicate man of seventy years of age—who reported that so far he had been unable to locate the villages referred to. He knew there

were several isolated villages in the heart of the mountains, but he did not believe that anywhere in Connemara did such a state of things exist as described by the special correspondent of the Dublin newspaper. He would, however, see if there were any means by which he could make his way into these places, and would furnish a report as soon as possible.

This report was duly forwarded to the Castle authorities by the Local Government Board and created much perturbation, as my letter to Mr. Burke had been received and was too circumstantial in detail to admit of unbelief. All that the Local Government Board could say to the Lord Lieutenant was that the inspector of the district, though a clever and experienced man, was too old for work in distress districts, and the Government must give the Local Government Board the services of some young, active men if the villages in the heart of the mountains and on the islands off the west coast were to be kept under close observation.

There was a conference at the Castle, and Lord Randolph Churchill, who was present, said they might do well to appoint the writer of the letter as one of the special inspectors, as he seemed to know the country and to understand the laws. The vice-president explained that the writer was his son, and he thought twenty-three years of age was rather young for so important a post; but hearing that I had been secretary to the Poor Law Inquiry Commission Lord Randolph pooh-poohed this and I was appointed a temporary inspector, and all

idea of working for the upper division of the Civil Service was given up.

Colonel Deane—afterwards killed at Majuba Hill—and the Hon. Algernon Bourke were the two other inspectors. As I had special knowledge of the Poor Law I was given the district of Mayo and West Galway, where the most widespread destitution prevailed and the land agitation was most acute.

My duties were to supervise relief administration, to attend the meetings of guardians, to act, in fact, as the eyes and ears of the Government, to keep them *au courant* with what was going on, and to investigate and report upon all matters upon which the Local Government Board required information.

For the first eight months the work was so strenuous that I do not believe that I ever slept two nights in succession in the same place. Belmullet was probably the poorest place I had to deal with, but not so thickly populated as the islands off the Galway coast, which were so inaccessible that they were always a source of the greatest anxiety to me.

CHAPTER III

H.M.S. *GOSHAWK*: RELIEF DISTRIBUTION—OFFICIAL AND OTHERWISE

THE islands off the Galway coast were barren rocks and little more than a standing place for fishermen and kelp makers. The population was congested, the potato plots were small, and the failure of the crop was so complete that the supervision of relief arrangements was a serious responsibility. The people were hopelessly in debt and under notice to quit, the kelp industry had failed, the price having fallen from £7 to £2 a ton, and the Poor Law unions were not financially in a position to afford relief on the scale necessary to meet such widespread destitution. The Duchess of Marlborough's Fund, however, was a great stand-by, and I never made a demand on it that did not meet with an immediate response.

H.M.S. *Goshawk* was placed at my disposal at Galway to enable me to convey relief supplies to the islands, and my first journey with this vessel, loaded with all the meal and flour she could carry, was made early in 1880.

The start was delayed for a few days owing to a rumour that a vessel from France laden with arms and ammunition parcelled in egg boxes, for the Land League, was expected in Costello Bay, and the *Goshawk* was dispatched at an hour's

notice with instructions to "steal quietly" up the coast at dead of night and lie hidden in Costello Bay till the gun-runner arrived. Whether this rebel craft ever started is very doubtful, but she certainly never arrived, and the following amazing sequel to the affair was told me when the vessel returned to take me and my cargo of foodstuffs on board.

The *Goshawk* had proceeded to "steal quietly" up the coast, *more suo* emitting a perfect volcano of sparks from her funnel and making the atmosphere throb with her engines in a manner which brought every dweller on the coast for miles around to his cabin door.

Among others it aroused the district inspector of the R.I.C. at Spiddal, who had been warned to look out for the gun-runner. He immediately jumped to the conclusion that this snorting demon belching out flames, skirting the coast in the night, was the very vessel he was expecting, and at once proceeded to lay up glory and promotion for himself by organizing a cutting-out expedition to effect her capture.

Every policeman near the coast was rounded up by special constables on bicycles, and they reached Costello Bay about an hour after the *Goshawk* had cast anchor between an island and a promontory of the coast. Two large country boats were commandeered, and with muffled oars they rowed over the dark waters for the ship.

Lieutenant Warden was on watch, and whenever the moon got behind the clouds he noticed the shadows of boats dodging along at the back of a

reef of rocks in a most mysterious way, and all the while getting nearer and nearer the ship. Commander Thomas Suckling joined him, and when after the moon had been obscured for some time the boats suddenly appeared fairly close, the captain hailed them. The R.I.C. perceiving they were spotted uttered loud war-whoops and sprinted for the ship, calling upon her to surrender.

Commander Suckling promptly replied with a gatling gun, breaking the water about a yard in front of the foremost boat for a beginning, much to the amazement of the R.I.C., who, perceiving that the raiders were armed with machine guns, turned about and rowed off hell for leather for the shore. The *Goshawk* promptly lowered the cutter and launch, and the excited bluejackets, yelling with excitement, gave chase and very soon overhauled and crashed into them. They were about to lay into the raiders with stretchers when the foe promptly capitulated and were rowed back in triumph to the ship. The surprise of Captain Suckling and the officers and men when fifteen smart, uniformed, well-set-up men with rifles were paraded on deck may easily be imagined.

"What are you?" they were asked.

"We are the R.I.C."

"Then what the devil were you sneaking round the island for, and why didn't you stop when we hailed you, and what did you mean by calling out to us to surrender?"

The crestfallen R.I.C. officer explained that they were waiting for the rebel vessel, and that

they were beginning to think that their captors were on the same errand, but that no notice had been given the R.I.C. of the *Goshawk's* mission, and in the absence of the rebel ship it would appear that one branch of the Government's forces had set out to capture the other.

The prisoners were fêted and fed ; there were sing-songs in the forecastle, pleasant yarns and hot grog in the wardroom till the break of day.

The *Goshawk* picked up me and my cargo, and two days later I was back again with her in Costello Bay.

I may mention one incident of the first distribution which shows that some forms of injustice may be even more palatable to the recipients than a well-intentioned attempt at fair play.

We had a good many tons of meal to distribute on this archipelago off the south Galway coast, and as the Dublin Relief Committee were anxious that it should reach the people without a moment's delay, I got the captain to allow a warrant officer, Mr. Trotter, to assist me in the distribution.

Mr. Trotter, the gunner, was the oracle of the ship, a jovial, ignorant, self-reliant individual who was completely satisfied as to the infallibility of his opinion on every subject under the sun. He had only been a few hours ashore in Ireland, but he never entertained any doubt whatever of his ability to settle the whole Irish question off hand. "Gimme one month and a free 'and—that's all I says, and I'll blanky soon show 'em what's what!" This was his stock declaration, and he firmly believed it.

I arranged that the gunner should take the pinnace and cutter, loaded up with all the cargo they could carry, to the outer islands, and I should put my lot in the launch for the inner group. With great earnestness I impressed on the gunner the scheme of distribution I had worked out, based upon the size of the holdings, the number in family, and the amount of livestock. From these particulars the people were to be assigned to one of three classes representing the degree of urgency, and grants of fixed amounts were to be given to each family according to the class to which it belonged.

Mr. Trotter listened in a perfunctory way, and accepted a copy of my schedule of classes.

"I don't 'old with that ther plan," he said. "Wot I says is this: wait till you lands the grub and sees the people. Then you gives them what they deserves, and if you satisfy them and the stuff goes round and you don't stand no blanky backchat, you're all right, and you don't want no plans."

In my superior wisdom I pitied the poor gunner, but decided to let him use his vaunted discretion, believing that his pride would have a severe fall, and that distribution of relief would not be so easy a task as he imagined.

So we separated, and after a long day I finished my distribution; but in spite of infinite painstaking I found it impossible to satisfy the people. The poorest were left out, they insisted, and nothing would please them except their own plan, which was that every man should be allowed to take a

couple of bags from my pile and distribute them to himself.

However, my scheme of distribution was sound and defensible on paper, and I stuck to it and left the islands, followed by the indignant protests of the people.

Passing the gunner's island on my way back to the ship, I found to my surprise and mortification that he had succeeded where I had failed. Everyone was in the highest of spirits, and he shoved off from the shore amid shouts of "Oh, it's himself that's the grand gentleman; it's him that's good to the poor."

"A proper lot of people," said Mr. Trotter complacently; "I could make 'em do anything. I knows how to 'andle that crowd"; and while I was dying to know his method of selection of the most in need, I was foolishly too proud to ask his help or advice.

The next day the same thing occurred. I finished my distribution amid howls, the gunner amid cheers. The third day this was not to be borne; so, swallowing my pride and annoyance, I appealed to him to help me and let me know his system of distribution. "Well," he said confidentially, "it's how I make 'em run races for it"; and this I found was indeed the case. The gunner and his bluejackets, having landed their supplies on the beach, organized a series of athletic sports as a means of selection, into the spirit of which the islanders entered with the wildest excitement and enthusiasm.

"But, Mr. Trotter," I said, utterly scandalized

at having as a young inspector to accept responsibility for such an indefensible scheme of poor relief, "don't you see that it is not fair? The weakest people, who needed the relief most, wouldn't win a race."

"All me eye," said Mr. Trotter. "Them as has empty bellies runs the fastest—less lumber to carry—a well-known fact in 'istory that."

In for a penny, in for a pound, so I handed over the whole distribution next day to Mr. Trotter, and accompanied him to see the working of his scheme on an island that had not as yet received attention.

The report of the Local Government Board's new methods of distributing relief had preceded us, and we were shown a long wide stretch of beach admirably suited for the new test of destitution.

The bachelors' race, the married men's race, the girls' and boys' race were a complete success; the three-legged race wasn't quite so good, as most of the competitors fell and took to fighting on the ground with their legs still tied together, and although they could not hurt each other much, Mr. Trotter deprecated any disturbance which might tend to the disparagement of the Government's programme.

The only failure was the married women's race. Seven or eight buxom wenches entered, but when brought to the post some of them wouldn't start. There was a good deal of tittering and chattering in Irish among themselves, till at last one of them put the matter frankly to Mr. Trotter. "The fact is, yer honour, we're expectin'."

Mr. Trotter, though somewhat abashed at this delicate point which had arisen, was fully equal to the emergency, and declared the first prize was to be held to have been won by the youngest bride. So Honor Flaherty, with her pretty, smiling face, her black hair and violet eyes, called forth from the crowd her bashful stripling of a husband, who, amidst the congratulations of the boat's crew, shouldered and carried off one by one the four bags of flour and oatmeal which represented the winnings of his loving spouse.

CHAPTER IV

RELIEF MEASURES AND THEIR APPLICATION

POOR as the islanders were, the people living in the congested districts inland, especially in the remote mountain villages, were even worse off—they had not the fishing or the kelp-making or the facilities for carrying turf by water to a market, all of which helped the coast dwellers to eke out a living; and as livestock was almost unsaleable, and the potato crop a wretched return from worn-out varieties of seed, they were indeed in a bad way. The western estates were, for the most part, heavily mortgaged, or carried large family charges, and the mortgagees were pressing the owners, under threats of penal interest, for punctual payments; and the owners, in their turn, believing that the few shillings of rent would be paid only for the political agitation of Davitt and his Land League, were urging their agents to take every means open to them by writs or evictions to recover the arrears of rent due.

To this stricken and frightened peasantry Parnell's promises of salvation at that time were the only hope, and it is not surprising perhaps that he found them ready listeners to his teachings.

Home Rule as the fulfilment of a nation's aspirations for self-government did not rouse their enthusiasm very much: their only aspirations were to be

able to live and to stick to their homesteads; but as the Land League leaders preached to them that Home Rule meant a peasant proprietary, and that a Home Rule Government would never allow evictions, Home Rule became the universal watchword, the people's vision of a rising sun heralding the day when the fear of being turned out homeless on the roadside for non-payment of rent would have passed from their minds for ever.

Hence it was that the demand for relief which followed the harvest of 1879 was thought at first to be a move in the political agitation rather than a well-founded cry of distress, and the Government scarcely understood how critical was the condition of the small landholders.

When the true state of the country was realized the Government became deeply impressed with the urgency of the case and took immediate steps to provide relief, and seemed ready to do almost anything that official ingenuity could devise to meet the distress. Relief works, however, were set aside as out of the question. The expenses of the famine of 1847–8, during which period upwards of seven millions had been spent, seemed to indicate that no effectual check against gross abuses in the administration of relief works could be ensured.

A million and a half was therefore appropriated from the Church surplus to relieve distress in 1879–80 on a different plan. It was lent at 1 per cent. to landowners, grand juries, sanitary authorities, and drainage boards for the purpose of unemployment, and to boards of guardians for

general relief purposes. In all cases repayment of principal and interest was postponed for two years.

Never was money more easily obtained, and never, I fancy, did it fail more lamentably in its object.

Of the £980,000 lent to landowners (repayable in thirty-five years) the amount that found its way to congested districts was inappreciable, and the same might be said of the loans to sanitary authorities and drainage boards. A good deal of the £271,000 lent to grand juries led to the opening of useful works, but as a means of relief to the most necessitous this plan was not a success, as the works were, as a rule, let in small contracts to men who employed their own friends and neighbours, irrespective of any consideration of the claims of the very poor. Still, a large sum of money was circulated in the distressed districts and employment afforded to many. The restrictions upon outdoor relief to able-bodied persons and occupiers of land were temporarily relaxed, and loans and grants were made for relief purposes.

In one union the guardians displayed great carelessness for a short period in giving outdoor relief, but generally speaking the power of affording outdoor relief was not much abused, and the total amount borrowed for relief purposes was about £25,000, of which about £10,000 was wiped off by grants.

The relief measures were, as may be expected, very unpopular, especially as the bulk of the money eventually found its way into the land-

lords' hands, and relief works were loudly demanded. If the Government had not voted one penny towards relief the abuse they received on all sides could hardly have been more emphatic.

"The apathy of England" was the phrase which was introduced into almost every platform speech and leading article.

Even when the U.S. frigate *Constellation* came from America with a cargo of food, the address of welcome from the Town Commissioners of a certain southern port contained no other topic than British indifference.

"England," it said, "stands cold-blooded and apathetic, looking at the scene of desolation she has wrought, while the whole American nation rises as one man to send relief."

Captain Potter of the *Constellation*, to whom this address was presented, was a plain, matter-of-fact man, and explained that this was a mistake and must be struck out or he could not accept the address. "The money was contributed by four individuals," said Captain Potter, "and the Government loaned the vessel."

All the address that followed was in the same strain—the brutality of England and the benevolence of America—while Captain Potter listened with his face getting redder and redder till the end was reached. Then he turned to the spokesman and said very gravely, "Do you wish to compliment me?" The spokesman explained with some trepidation that such indeed was the object of the deputation. "Well," said Captain Potter, "do you think that to hoist a man on my

back and then flog him is a compliment to me ?" So he drove his pen through this also, and the address of welcome as amended was a model of brevity and read something like this :

" In bidding you welcome to these shores . . .
" We remain, on behalf of the Commissioners,
. . . . . Chairman,
. . . . . Town Clerk.

The relief which reached the people and which was subject to no irritating restrictions was that administered by the local committees from the Duchess of Marlborough's and the Mansion House Funds ; these two funds alone distributed a quarter of a million. The Society of Friends also opened a fund, the Dominion of Canada another, the *New York Herald* another ; money, indeed, was pouring into the country in a way that fairly turned the heads of the people. Never were such times, the bonnives got fat, the fowls increased and multiplied, and by the time all these funds were in full working order about March or April, there was no question of want anywhere, and this year of scarcity became a year of plenty, the like of which the poor people in their wildest flights of imagination had never dared to dream.

The Duke of Edinburgh came round the coast in H.M.S. *Lively*, and finding in one place that the people were suffering from rheumatism and neuralgia, which the ship's doctor told him was the result of low feeding and poverty of blood, he distributed a quantity of tinned soups, and other delicacies of this kind. " It's a pity, though,"

the dispensary doctor said to me, "that he didn't explain to them that the things were meant to eat and not let the creatures be rubbing them into their shoulders and backs for rheumatism the way they are." I believe this was generally done. One man, in whose house I found an empty meat-extract tin, spoke with bated breath of the marvellous properties of this mysterious preparation when applied in the form of a poultice for neuralgia. The doctor informed me that he found one man with his shirt off undergoing a vigorous application of tinned Julien soup to his back for lumbago.

James Lowther was the Chief Secretary at the time, and his appointment, I remember, occasioned much surprise and amusement, for although he was well known on the turf and in all sporting circles as a real good sort, still, as a politician he was rather on the back benches and had never held even a minor office of State. I seem to see him now, with his heavy, protruding under-jaw and his jocose expression, striding down Dame Street with a heavy stick and a big dog, and his pot hat on the back of his head. The officials with whom he came in contact, to a man worshipped him, for although he disliked being bothered with office files to read and problems to unravel, he was an intense relief after Sir Michael Hicks-Beach, who was a most cantankerous and hypercritical person.

Moreover, "Jim Lowther," as he was known to everybody, was possessed of great common sense and good judgment, and he knew exactly

how any occurrence or possible eventuality would be regarded in Parliament. If the heads of departments could manage by skilful diplomacy to get him to go into any difficulty with them, they always left him wiser men, with the disinterested opinion of a well-balanced mind to guide them.

Unlike his predecessor, who wanted to have everything submitted to him in the hope of finding something to snarl about, James Lowther was as elusive as the will-o'-the-wisp.

Lord Morris summed up him and his predecessor to a circle round the fireside of the Kildare Street Club as follows: "They call him Jim. When ye hear a man called Jim or Jack or Tim by all his friends, ye may know he is a good fellow. Now, I'll go bail it would be a long time before ye'd hear anyone call Sir Michael Hicks-Beach 'Mick.'"

Lowther had merely a distant glimpse of the coming storm in Ireland, for just when the fires of the land agitation were smouldering Disraeli's Government went out and the government of Ireland passed into the hands of W. E. Forster with Lord Cowper as Viceroy.

CHAPTER V

W. E. FORSTER AS CHIEF SECRETARY

LORD COWPER took practically no part in initiating or directing the policy of the Irish Government. His entertainments and public functions, graced by his queenly, beautiful consort, fully occupied him, and he was well content to leave everything to his experienced Chief Secretary, whose steadfast honesty of purpose and burning desire to do what was righteous and just at all costs were almost superhuman. No other Chief Secretary that I have ever met possessed anything quite approaching Forster's divine obsession in this respect; but it was not a characteristic which could be helpful to him or likely to smooth the path for any Irish Secretary. Opportunism and compromise had no abiding place in the tenor of his thoughts and actions.

I saw a great deal of him, as the west was the storm centre of the land agitation, and Forster, while determined to carry out the law without fear or favour, was torn to pieces with the stories of evictions and distress and other miseries which the people underwent from 1880–82. He passed many administrative Acts—among them the Arrears of Rent Act, the Land Act, the Seed Supply Act—and took the greatest interest in their administration.

He sent for me one Sunday from the Lodge, to give him some information about evictions and seed supply. I mentioned that the Seed Acts had been a tremendous success everywhere except in one district on the west coast, the most poverty stricken in Ireland, where they had totally failed. I remember him so well on that occasion, leaning back against the mantelpiece, with his hands deep in his trousers pockets, looking at me from under his shaggy eyebrows. He then paced up and down the room and turned on me, asking what was to be done. I said nothing that I could see, as one could not expect Parliament to legislate for an exceptional case. The valuation per head of the people was only about 5s. 6d. and they had no money. He then asked me how much seed would meet the emergency. I made a mental calculation and said between 200 and 300 tons.

He went to his desk and came back with a cheque for £1,000.

"Better say nothing about this," he said, "but go to Glasgow to-night and charter a steamer and land the potatoes on the quay at Blacksod; or, if you have to explain the source of distribution, you can say it came from some charitably disposed persons."

I bought the shipload from Alex Cross and Sons, and within three weeks the seeds were in the ground; they returned the finest crop the district had ever known.

Forster had been in Ireland at the time of the famine of 1845 and had seen so much of evic-

tions, starvation and disease that at the very mention of evictions the iron seemed to enter his soul. His Arrears of Rent Act did a good deal to stop evictions where there was genuine hardship, but the land agitators deemed it necessary that there should be some instances to keep alive public sympathy with the farmers, and many were instructed to refuse even reasonable offers by landlords which they could easily have met.

The police required for the evictions were asked in each instance, Is it a case of hardship? and Mr. Forster sent me to the evictions for a report as to this from my point of view, it being strictly understood that I did not consult the police or let them know my mission. I never learned whether my reports were a corroboration or a contradiction of those of the police, but it was a soul-racking job and I hated it.

Forster found the country in an appalling state on his arrival. The loss of the crops, the slump in the price of cattle, and the weight of debt had taken the heart out of the farmers, and as the Land League was persuading the people to believe that outrages and resistance to the law were their only hope, Forster in his efforts to put down this state of things was execrated. It was his first duty to safeguard human life and property, and in this respect he conscientiously tried to perform it. Though he abhorred evictions and could not avoid giving police protection to the sheriffs and agents who had to enforce them, he sought by every means in his power to bring influence to bear on the landowners to postpone evictions

till better times, and his Arrears of Rent Act was a practicable measure which helped the owners of many mortgaged estates to carry out his wishes. But the impossibility of getting information concerning agrarian outrages which could be made public without risk of death to the informers, made it a perfectly hopeless task to try and bring to justice even those who were well known to be the guilty parties.

It was in these circumstances that his "Coercion Act," as it was called, was introduced. It was the only means his police and legal advisers could suggest by which the country people could be sheltered from intimidation and outrage. This Act enabled anyone to be taken up on suspicion and kept in gaol at the pleasure of the Lord Lieutenant. The suspects were not compelled to do hard labour, nor were they deprived of the right to obtain books, letters or food from outside. They were treated as prisoners awaiting trial, and in process of time most of the local leaders of the League were swept into gaol, with the result that the weekly police reports showed an immediate diminution of terrorism and crime. The agitation, however, was only driven below the surface, and this measure authorizing imprisonment without trial intensified the fury of the people against Forster and in some measure was responsible for the organization of the secret society of Invincibles.

The Act had other grave objections, for although the village tyrant was laid by the heels for the moment, it was very demoralizing to the police force, as it made them rather careless and

perfunctory in their efforts to detect the real culprits. After an outrage was committed they took care that some member of the local League was temporarily extinguished, whether they had any actual proof connecting him with the particular event or not. The police had to report to Dublin the facts relating to every offence and the result of their investigation. The district inspector, knowing he would get a rap on the knuckles if nothing was discovered, worried the life out of his subordinates until they could submit someone as a suspect. The following conversation which was narrated to me by an R.M. is an illustration of the sort of thing which took place. The offence in question was the burning of a haystack and the police inquiries were all in vain.

"Damn it all, Sergeant," the exasperated district inspector said, "are you fellows all asleep? Are you walking through the country with your eyes shut all day? Surely some of you must have some suspicion of who has done this burning, if you are worth your salt. Eh! What? Speak out, man!"

"Well, now," said the goaded sergeant, in a deeply confidential tone, "I notice that Tim Molloy is looking very black at me these times."

"Ah, ha," said the D.I., brightening up, "that's a lad I tell ye. He is deputy vice-president of the League in Ballymore, isn't he? What put you on to him, eh?"

"Well, now," says the sergeant, "he used to say 'Good morrow, Sergeant,' and him meeting me down the road, aisy and civil spoken like, but

now begob, since this burning, when he sees me coming he'll walk across the road and pass me out on t'other side. He *doesn't do that for nothing!*"

Sundry constables would throw in similar instances of Tim's furtive behaviour, so in the middle of the night Tim found himself pulled out of bed and dispatched to the nearest gaol by the morning train.

The D.I. would be commended by Dublin Castle for his promptitude, and puts a note on the file: "It is only right to say that the speedy arrest of Tim Molloy reflects the highest credit on Sergeant Murphy."

Tim was accordingly kept in durance for three months, fed sumptuously on chicken and wine by the Prisoners' Sustentation Committee, and on his release he is met by a brass band at the railway station and the glorious intelligence is imparted to him that during his absence he has been unanimously elected a P.L.G.

How Forster escaped assassination is a marvel. Divine Providence must certainly have been watching over this brave man. He eluded his watchers at every opportunity and had extraordinary escapes. On one occasion when he was going to London the Invincibles with their knives were awaiting him on Westland Row platform perfectly determined to get him at all risks, but an hour or so previously some Castle official—I think it was Colonel Hillier—suggested that the day was so lovely a walk would do them both good, and they walked as far as Blackrock Station.

There are a number of similar instances where a quite unpremeditated and unforeseen change in the plan was found to have saved him from an attempt on his life. He was a fatalist and took no precautions whatsoever.

"Buckshot Forster" was the name he was invariably known by, and the origin of the title was that as so many cases occurred where the rifle fire of the police injured people some distance away from the scene of the assault, it was thought better to substitute buckshot for bullets; it had a limited range and had also the additional advantage that when used at close quarters it was more effective in disabling the assailant.

Every man in the Civil Service loved Forster; he was tolerant, sympathetic and as brave as a lion, and though harassed and vilified by the Irish Press and people, he nevertheless bore no malice to anyone.

He had a tremendous backing with the Society of Friends, and it was at his instance that James H. Tuke came over to the West of Ireland with large funds for the relief of distress.

Buckshot Forster was the subject of many songs hawked about by pedlars at local fairs, and one of the most popular I record here, as it conveys a rather peculiar complimentary recognition of the astuteness of the Irish leader.

Oh, it was ould Billy Gladstone and he said to himself,
I never shall be satisfied till Parnell's on the shelf.
Go, Herbert, get your warrant, under Queen Victoria's seal,
And we'll lock the pride of Erin's Isle in dark Kilmainham Gaol.

Then up got Buckshot Forster and he buttoned on his coat,
And took the train from Euston Square to catch the Kingstown boat,
And, oh, the seas were mighty rough and he was feeling queer,
When Mallon and his myrmidons came to meet him on the pier.

Oh, soundly slept the patriot, for he was kilt with work,
Exhortin' of the multitudes in Castlebar and Cork,
When Mallon came and roused him up by ringing at the bell,
Disturbin' of his slumbers in bould Morrison's Hotel.

Then up says Mr. Morrison, "Get up your sowl and run"
(And bright in history's pages be the name of Morrison),
"There's Mallon ringing at the bell with fifty police or more,
So get up and I will let yez out upon the kitchen door."

Oh, brightly gleamed the patriot's eye, it never shall be said
Parnell from Ireland's enemies had turned about and fled.
"Parnell, aboo, for liberty, besides I guess," says he,
"That Mallon has locked the kitchen door and took away the key."

They took him and they bound him there, those minions of the law,
For 'twas Pat the boots was looking on and told me what he saw.
But sorra a foot the patriot would stir from there until
He had made them take 15 per cent. reduction off the bill.

CHAPTER VI

LORD FREDERICK CAVENDISH; MR. GEORGE OTTO TREVELYAN

FORSTER was succeeded by Lord Frederick Cavendish, who came over full of sympathy for the Irish people and with an understanding from the Cabinet that he was to have a pretty free hand in the organization of remedial measures for the improvement of agriculture and industries as a step towards the establishing of a better spirit of mutual good will between England and Ireland. My father had a talk with the new Chief Secretary on the day of his arrival, and I received a letter from him the following morning telling me to be ready with certain particulars as to the causes of the distress in the West, and hinting that when the new Chief's schemes were known we would see bonfires blazing on every hill in the West.

I had scarcely read this letter when Mr. J. H. Tuke, who was staying with me in Mack's Hotel in Galway, burst into the room pale as death, with a telegram in his hand, crying out that Tom Burke and Lord Frederick had been assassinated the night before in the park.

There is no need to recapitulate here the story of this tragedy or to speculate on what the history of the country might have been if Lord Frederick

had been spared to give effect to his policy of Industrial Reform. The stamping out of the Invincibles became the first necessity to which everything else had to give place.

Some little time after this I received a letter from some one in the Government—I forget who at the moment—enclosing from Lady Frederick Cavendish a cheque for the amount of the two days' salary which had accrued to Lord Frederick's estate in respect of his services as Chief Secretary, and saying that although his power to help Ireland was gone she would like to feel that even his two days' work had brought some benefit, however small, to some one, and I was asked to apply the money with this object to the best of my discretion.

It was not an easy matter to decide how this small sum of money could be spent so as to show practical results, but I finally decided on purchasing spillets and nets for the islanders on Achilbeg, who were good boatmen but who had no proper appliances for fishing, and were in very great distress at that time.

I got the nets from Musselburgh as well as I remember; they were sent by the Glasgow boat to Westport, and H.M.S. *Orwell* took them with me to the island, where they were distributed. The recipients selected were able-bodied young married men with families who would be likely to use them to the best advantage. I sent the names of the people to Lady Frederick Cavendish, and for the time heard no more about it; but there was a very curious sequel.

First, however, I should say that I got a letter from Lady Frederick saying she wanted no mention whatever to be made of this gift to anyone, but unfortunately I received this instruction too late; I had already mentioned it to the curate at Achilbeg, who was an emotional young man and was profoundly touched by Lady Frederick's letter. He said he would speak of it at Mass, and asked me to come in to hear what he said. He referred to Lord Frederick's sympathy for Ireland and his burning desire to do good, and the requital he got, in such moving terms that the whole congregation fell down on their knees, and amid the sobs and weeping that filled the building, the curate's voice broke and he knelt there with his face in his hands unable to continue.

The scene in the little dark chapel on that stormy day, with the hushed and sorrow-stricken kneeling people is an ineffaceable memory to me.

And now for the sequel.

Many years afterwards, comparatively recently in fact, Lady Frederick wrote and asked me if I could tell her anything of the families who received the gift. I told her I had long since forgotten even their names, but if she could send me any record of them I would inquire. She had kept the names and sent them to me, and I went to the island and got the parish priest to produce his Achilbeg Parish Register, saying that I wished to ask about some families. I went through the names one by one (I give fictitious ones here).

Tom Lavelle (Pat). Was he living there yet?

"Oh, no; he and his family left for the States long ago."

"Do they ever write home?"

"Yes, they are doing very well and sent money to bring out his niece."

Michael Sweeney?

"His son is there yet. That fellow's well off. He has two grand boats."

John Moran?

"That fellow has a daughter a school-teacher; he's a well-off man."

And so on. With two exceptions who could not be traced, every man who had received Lady Frederick's gift had prospered exceedingly.

When the list was finished the priest turned to me and said: "And now, sir, will ye tell me why you have chosen out all the best-off people of the island to inquire about? Sure that's a very poor place, and if you are going to do anything for the people it's not those people," he said rather indignantly, "that is wanting help. Someone has been giving you teetotally wrong information."

However, I did not enlighten him. Indeed, I was too much dumbfounded by the remarkable coincidence to discuss the matter at all with him.

Lord Spencer witnessed from his window in the Viceregal Lodge, which looked on the broad walk through the garden on to the main road of the park, the assassination of his Chief and Under-Secretary. He was too far off to see who was engaged in the struggle, but he saw a car pull

up and five men fighting for a brief space, and two down on the ground as the others drove off. He observed that those on the ground did not rise, so he sent some men from the guard to see what had happened, and it was on their return that he learned the shocking intelligence that what he had seen lying on the ground were the dead bodies of his Chief and Under-Secretary.

Parliament armed him with drastic powers, and the Invincibles were harassed and pursued relentlessly till they paid the penalty of their crime and the society was broken up.

The English in Ireland have, on many occasions, shown an extraordinary lack of foresight, but it is doubtful whether they have ever made so great a blunder as they did in their failure to protect Carey, the informer, who turned Queen's Evidence in the Phœnix Park murder trials. The consequences of this blunder will never be eradicated, and the effects will be felt by every Government which endeavours to bring murderers to justice. When the Invincibles were carrying out their campaign of assassination, and were evading capture by the secrecy of their movements, the public were consoled by the assurances of many people experienced in Irish history that these secret societies never lasted long in Ireland, as there was always someone among them who would sell the others for money sooner or later, and the break up of the society was really only a matter of time.

The argument that vengeance might reach the informer was laughed at. The informer, it

was pointed out, would clear out of the country under a good disguise, and although it was contrary to all moral doctrine that it should be so, it was a well-known thing that many informers who had left the country for their country's good had made fortunes with their blood money under assumed names in foreign lands.

When Carey stepped from the dock into the witness-box and gave evidence which led to the execution of the Phœnix Park murderers, of whom he was one of the leaders, the world was thrilled, and the lesson of the danger of secret societies to their members went home; and it is very doubtful if any strong murder society would ever again have been set on foot in Ireland if Carey had got safely away. As it was, the fact of his speedy assassination by a man who followed him to the Cape has burnt into the minds of the people that vengeance will follow informers to the very ends of the earth; since that time, although the police and Government have never had any difficulty in buying information as to the perpetrators of crimes, convictions have been impossible, as no informer, with Carey's fate before him, has ever been persuaded to come forward and tell in court the story he has told to the police.

The Government were blind not to have seen that Carey's safety was of supreme importance. They could easily have kept him in custody till an opportunity arrived of sending him out of the country disguised, but they regarded him as a horrible ruffian; they gave him his life for turning

Queen's Evidence, and money to take him away, but they were utterly careless as to what happened to him after that, and his end has been an obstacle to the expiation of crime for the last forty years.

The secret service money was always, in itself, a terror to the secret societies, and the following is an instance of this. There was a secret society started under a fanatical young curate during my time in the West. It was directed at bailiffs and herds; three shootings had taken place in the quiet little village, and no one had been brought to justice. The parish priest was an elderly, easy-going man, and he had been quite unaware that his curate was mixed up in the business, but he got a hint of this which he followed up and convinced himself of the correctness of his information. He was too clever a man to try to break up the society by argument or denunciation, so he went off to Tuam and put the whole story before the archbishop and within a week the fanatical curate, without reason assigned, was transferred to a curacy in the most remote part of the diocese. The parish priest then got himself nominated as a member of the society, and, having got to know the whole of their secrets, he began by subtle hints and queries privately to members of the society to raise in the minds of each member suspicions of all the others. He made no charges, gave nothing away and said nothing definitely about anybody, he only asked for information; but the result of it was that he created such an atmosphere of fear lest secret service money was circulating that, in two or three months, the society broke up in

confusion, and most of its members left the country.

Mr. George Otto Trevelyan, who was appointed Chief Secretary, represented the Irish Government in the House of Commons, but the direction of the policy and administration of Irish affairs was Lord Spencer's responsibility, as he was in the Cabinet, and Trevelyan was his spokesman outside. Trevelyan was a very perfect gentleman, but he was so high-minded and thin-skinned that he used to be cut to the soul at the scandalous imputations of corruption and the misrepresentation of his acts and utterances which some of the Irish members delighted to make when they found out how easy it was to take a rise out of him.

He had, however, the sole responsibility for Local Government Board administration, and there was one grave question of policy he had to decide which required the utmost fortitude and courage to carry out, and which he did carry out in spite of the whole force of the Press and the people being against him. But if he did, it wrung him to the soul with sorrow and apprehension. He found that the small farmers all over the country, and particularly in the west and seaboard, had been utterly demoralized by the constant succession of overlapping relief measures ever since the winter of 1879.

Up to that time occupiers of the land could not be relieved outside the workhouse, and the effect of this provision of the Irish Poor Law, harsh as it may seem in these enlightened days,

had for thirty years kept the people off the rates and taught them to rely on their own independent exertions. They worked their farms industriously, sent some of their children to service and others to America, and from 1850 to 1879 the rural workhouses were practically empty except for the sick and infirm. Then came the total failure of the potato crop in 1879 with depreciation in the value of livestock, and it quickly became apparent that as the people had no fixity of tenure, were up to their eyes in debt to their landlords, and could get no credit from the shopkeepers, they would either have to go into the workhouse or die in their homes if the Poor Law alone was relied upon.

Although it is unlikely that the people would actually have died rather than accept this form of relief, still it was plain that they would have suffered intense hardships first, and that the Poor Law would have to be supplemented by other measures to prevent the most acute distress in that year of famine. The various relief measures enacted have been described elsewhere, and charitable associations poured money into the country to such an extent that the relief operations were extravagant, and the people found it paid them better to have a bad crop and a good case for charity than to obtain such independence as their land at its best would afford.

Splendid supplies of imported seed had been provided, and although this produced a marvellous return next season, the clamour for abnormal relief measures continued, and when in 1881 and 1882

the Poor Laws were superseded by Distress Acts under which relief was afforded without any test of destitution, it was becoming an abuse. In 1883 the usual cry of distress was again raised. As this was a good average year and the people had fixity of tenure and fair rents and credit with the shopkeepers, the Government were advised that if special relief operations were again resorted to they would have to become a permanent institution, as people would never be able to do without them.

The greatest danger, of course, was, in my district, as it comprised Mayo and Galway, where the population is most congested. I was called up in conference with Lord Spencer, Trevelyan, the Under-Secretary, and the Vice-President of the Local Government Board. The Nationalist newspapers, in support of their case for a renewal of Government grants, were shrieking as usual about the appalling destitution, and it required a good deal of courage to decide that these would not be renewed; the rates in the western unions were tremendously high, and it could easily be shown that if the people were compelled to resort to the workhouse in large numbers, the Government would have had to make grants in aid of the local rates.

I felt that there was a heavy responsibility on me, but at the same time I was sure that, owing to the improved condition of affairs, the people would be able to maintain themselves outside the workhouse. Trevelyan, on the other hand, was very unhappy about it, and foresaw that every

old woman who died of old age would be found by the coroner's jury to have died of starvation; that the Press would paint lurid pictures of misery which would wring the hearts of the English people and make his position in Parliament a most trying one; and that he might be compelled to bow his head to the storm and regard the normal condition of the people as one demanding Government support. However, he had a strong sense of what was right for the country; and, backed up by the opinion of Sir Robert Hamilton and the Vice-President of the Local Government Board, he determined to revert to the normal system of relief. The public announcement of "Trevelyan's Pinch of Hunger Policy" as it was called in the Press, was duly made, and the boards of guardians were given definitely to understand that the Government had determined to rely upon the Poor Law alone.

The uproar was tremendous, and every possible means was taken to force on relief work. Everything Trevelyan had foreseen happened, and the descriptions of famine-stricken people written by imaginative young pressmen would have melted the heart of a stone.

Deputations of distressful persons were organized to attend the guardians' meetings and although the guardians knew exactly the amount of importance to be attached to such, they used them for Press purposes and for questions in the House. I remember one deputation of a hundred men, with banners and flags with inscriptions such as "Blood or Bread" coming to Oughterard Union while I

was attending the board. Now, for some reason or other banners and flags always had a rather intimidating effect on the Poor Law guardians, and the porter came up and announced that there was a distress deputation outside wishing to see the guardians. The guardians were rather fed up with deputations, as they had had one at each of the last four meetings.

"Ah! tell them to go to blazes," said the chairman; "we can't be wasting time blathering again with them."

"Oh, you can't do that," said the porter in an awestruck voice; "sure they have banners!"

The guardians caved in on the spot, and as many of the deputation as could fit into the room came in with their banners and demanded immediate relief or they would pull down the workhouse. The chairman said the guardians had no money, but would at once write to the Local Government Board and demand relief grants, and they would have a reply on next board day.

The deputation then said they would return to hear the reply, and they tramped downstairs, bringing their intimidatory banners with them. Then the porter returned and said the deputation thought that there would be no use in taking their banners home, they might get soiled. Would the guardians kindly take care of them in the board room till next meeting?

The guardians would do anything to oblige. So on the following Thursday the porter announced that the deputation were there again, and would the guardians kindly give them their banners?

So "Blood or Bread," "Relief or ——," and all the rest of the bloodcurdlers were sent downstairs and brought up again by the deputation and waved before the guardians, who then announced that the sneaking ruffians who constituted the Local Government Board had refused any Government grant, and the guardians were now going to put on record a resolution which would lift the hair off them.

It was rather a critical time for me, as if the policy had broken down I would have been completely discredited; but I had taken every precaution to see that the relieving officers understood their powers to afford relief in all cases of sudden and urgent necessity, and that if anyone were allowed to die for want of food they would be held responsible. Moreover, it was plain to me, when contrasting the condition of the people with what it was when relief works were necessary, there was no reason to fear that anybody would die of starvation or that the people would be compelled to crowd into the workhouse.

I had often to come up to see Trevelyan, and did my best to reassure him; but the very specific and harassing pictures of distress in the daily papers and the resolutions of the boards of guardians, and the sweeping assertion of local orators that the whole countryside were dying like flies, made him very uneasy. He would walk up and down the room with his hands behind his back and his head bent, cross-examining me as to the minutest detail of the arrangements made to meet every possible eventuality.

He made one mistake, and that was in yielding to pressure to visit Donegal to see for himself the state of things. He had no knowledge of Donegal in normal times, and the wretched appearance of the small cabins, the tatters of the youthful population, and the little potato patches between the rocks saddened him. All this was duly impressed on him as being either the immediate result of his "Pinch of Hunger Policy" or at all events of something which could be substantially ameliorated by reopening relief works. All sorts of tableaux were arranged for him on this visit. In one case the horse had conveniently got a stone in his shoe and the carriage had to be stopped just where the local guardian happened to be passing at the time with a friend who was a newspaper reporter. He was surprised to find that this gentleman in the carriage was the Chief Secretary for Ireland, and there was an interesting conversation about the state of the country and the people.

"Wretched houses they seem," said the Chief Secretary; "why don't they build themselves better ones while they are about it?"

"Well, they are bad ones, surely," said the P.L.G.; "were you ever inside one of them, sir? You may as well come up now, as you happen to have stopped, and have a look at one of them. Here, this one will do, the passage into it is dry."

And after the party and a few other stragglers had all packed themselves inside the house, the P.L.G. comes out again, dragging Trevelyan after him. "Horrible, horrible," he ejaculated; "even

I wasn't aware such things could exist in a civilized country."

The Chief Secretary had gone into the house and found the whole family making a dinner of seaweed, having nothing else to eat. The newspapers rang with this casual visit of the Chief Secretary. It was a dramatically planned thing, but it is scarcely necessary to observe that neither then, nor before, nor after did any family in Donegal dine exclusively on seaweed.

However, Trevelyan stuck to his guns. A careful watch was kept on the relieving officer, and in spite of the prophecies in the Press there were no authentic cases of anything approaching starvation and no increase in the numbers admitted to the workhouse. The people, seeing that the era of distress grants was at an end, and that the Government accepted no responsibility for keeping them out of the workhouse, set to work with energy at the cultivation of their little holdings. The fishing, the turf-cutting, and the kelp-making commenced again with increased vigour, the harvest was a good one, and no more was heard of famine or the need of relief works till John Morley came to Ireland in 1884 to govern the country according to Irish ideas.

Lord Spencer's life was always in some danger, but the fact seemed to concern him a great deal less than it did the police. He was watched very closely, and a careful guard was maintained over all who came inside the Castle gates. I never shall forget the scene one night when I dined

at the Castle and two uninvited guests, man and wife, appeared and were announced. The man was a rather wild-looking creature, and the A.D.C., who spotted every arrival on these occasions, notified them who they were to take in, and their place at dinner, was in a state of great perturbation when he found the new arrivals' names were not on his list. He reported it to the Chamberlain and others and the uninvited guests were submitted to as strict and careful scrutiny as politeness would admit of. A couple of detectives were told off to watch them, and the A.D.C. proceeded to draw them. He "hoped the invitation reached them in due time." The uninvited guests looked rather surprised. Oh, yes; they got the letter two days ago. Had they a long drive, it was rather a cold night? Oh, no; they were stopping at the Shelbourne Hotel. A messenger was dispatched to the Shelbourne to make inquiries, but meanwhile there was nothing for it but to go in to dinner, and the obvious thing to do was to put the two uninvited guests as far away from Lord Spencer as possible. So they were put at the end of the table with the staff and the State oculists, dentists, chaplains and surgeons which make up the tail of the household.

At last one of the uninvited guests, craning forward and looking up the table, said to the A.D.C., "It's a very queer thing that I don't see my cousin Otto here." The pent-up feelings of the A.D.C. were so relieved that he almost became hysterical. He doesn't see his cousin Otto! Pass the word down! This message

travelled the length of the table, and confidence was restored. Turning to the guest, the A.D.C. said, "Mr. Otto Trevelyan is at his own Lodge; he does not live here." The guests were in terrible tribulation, wringing their hands, saying, "Oh! He will be waiting dinner for us—we had better go." It was explained to them that the Lodge was two miles off, and the best thing they could do was to finish dinner and go out afterwards and spend the evening with Cousin Otto and explain their absence.

There was a good deal of emigration these years, and in one part of the Belmullet district, where the land was so wretchedly poor that it could not support its population in even comparative comfort at the best of times, the Government and the Society of Friends made arrangements to ship the whole population on to farms in Canada. The emigrant vessel came into Blacksod Bay, and Lord Spencer determined to come and see it off. He came by train to Ballina, with a huge cavalcade of hussars and mounted police, A.D.C.s., etc. Belmullet was forty-two miles off, and as I had to go with him I hired a tandem car, but Lord Spencer determined to ride the whole journey. He had fresh horses to meet him halfway, creatures with beautiful paces, and he was no doubt comfortable enough, but one pitied the police on their rough hacks who accompanied him. They arrived dead beat after forty miles along a bog road. But Lord Spencer was as fresh as paint, and embarked that evening on H.M.S. *Sea Horse*, while his cavalcade was billeted all

over the village. The following day he steamed down the bay, boarded the Allan liner, and addressed the emigrants. He wished them luck, and pointed out that there would be no severance from their families by his scheme, as the Government free passages had only been given on condition that entire families left, and that the holdings could be consolidated into decent-sized farms. It may here be said that this scheme did not at all suit the old people, who wanted their sons and daughters to go to America and send them home money to enable them to remain on the farms. However, as there was a period of six months' redemption before their farms could be taken up, the old people went as far as Canada, started their families off to the States from there, and returned by the next boat.

The remoteness of some of the distressed areas in the West from hotel accommodation added very much to the labours of Government officials charged with the administration of relief works, but the owners of the little village pothouses did their best and one was always sure of good fires, and fresh eggs and tea. Where they failed was in the matter of servants, who were extraordinary creatures as a rule, and absolutely untrained. Well I remember Peter, a genial car-driver from a western hotel, who proudly informed me when driving me to Glenmark that he was to be promoted to the responsible position of boots and waiter that very night.

I was the only person in the hotel so he began his experiments on me. At 7 a.m. I awoke from a deep sleep under the impression that I was on board

the gun-boat in a heavy sea, then on opening my eyes and collecting my wits, I found Peter grabbing my shoulder with both hands rocking me violently to and fro, and vociferating, "Would your honour like to be called now?" Finding it was only 7 o'clock I abused him soundly, and told him to be off and wake me at 8.30. When next I awoke it was 9.30, so I rang furiously and asked Peter why he hadn't called me at 8.30.

"Sure, I did," said Peter, "ay, and I put it down on the slate. Will I fetch it up and show it t'you?"

"You needn't," I said, "but why didn't you knock at my door?"

"I did," said Peter, "but you being that tired, I knocked aisy for fear I'd wake ye again!"

Peter as waiter was not any more of a striking success than he was as boots. "There's yer dinner, now," he announced on the occasion of his first appearance as waiter. I moved over to the dinner-table with the book I was reading, but after waiting for a minute or two and seeing no dinner, I turned round to find Peter standing to attention stock still behind my chair.

"Well, what is there for dinner?" I asked him.

"There's soup," he answered, "grand soup by the Holy."

"Well, where is it?" I said.

Peter gave a howl of apology. "I declare to God I forgot the soup," and bolted down stairs.

There was one little hotel in the West where the proprietor put up officials for seven shillings and sixpence a day, and fed them with the greatest

profusion, and generally insisted on opening a bottle of champagne for them on their departure. He was a queer character, and always came into the room at dinner time and stood with his arms akimbo and a broad grin on his face, and exhorted his guests to " ate their fill." The food was generally excellent but on the only occasion when I found it otherwise he deftly turned the fact into a tribute to his own astuteness and foresight.

I had just arrived with Lynch Staunton, one of the inspectors, and before we came down to dinner we noticed that a perfectly appalling smell pervaded the house. It was not drains, it was far worse, and when dinner, which consisted of a fine turkey and a boiled ham, was brought in, the smell became nearly unbearable. Our host was standing in his usual attitude, and seeing our look of suffocation, he said, " I wondther now would yez have any little iday of that ham being high-like ? "

Lynch Staunton dug the knife into the ham, and with a yell leaped to the open window. " High ? " he shrieked, " why, it's stinking, positively stinking ! "

" Aha ! " shouted our host triumphantly, giving his knee a resounding slap, " didn't I know it, what's I tell ye. Didn't I say to herself in the kitchen, ' the ham's gone to Hell ' sez I. Aha ! ye couldn't deceive me in the matther of the quality of a ham. Biddy [to the waiting-maid], come here now and tell the gentleman what I said to herself in the kitchen."

" Ye said," replied Biddy, " ' I wondther what ailed that pig,' sez you."

" I'll engage I did," said he with exultation.

"Then why did you send it up?" said Lynch Staunton irritably.

"Just for to see would yez agree with me. Sure two heads is betther nor one!"

One might easily fill a whole book with reminiscences of hotels in the West before Arthur Balfour opened up the country with light railways, which led to the establishment of good hotels for travellers, and I cannot leave the subject without recalling as a characteristic example of hotel life in the early 'eighties one hotel in the extreme west of Mayo where the landlord ran the hotel with an old woman as housekeeper, without any proper books. His only data for making out the bills for visitors was from pencil memoranda on loose slips of paper which were always getting lost, and from his own memory.

"Come here now till we'll make out yer bill," he would say to a visitor who had to depart unexpectedly. "How much whisky did ye drink since Thursday last? Will I put ye down for a bottle or maybe a bottle and a half?"

"Certainly not," the tourist would say, "I never had any at all."

"All right so. Then I'll put ye down for a bottle of clar't, will I?"

"Do nothing of the kind, I've had nothing but ginger ale and Guinness's stout occasionally."

"Well, we'll make it a dozen of each, eh? Will that do ye?"

Then there would be a heated argument over this, but by now the mail car for the train would be hooting furiously at the door, so in desperation the tourist would slip down a sum of

money on the table and leap on the car and go off without either bill or receipt.

I have seen this sort of thing happen over and over again, and the landlord assured me that he was a heavy loser over "the impatience of them people in settling up." I have my doubts on this, as if there were any wines used which he could not account for, he took the precaution of entering them upon every bill, declaring that the people who had drunk them would pay as a matter of course, whereas those who hadn't would point out the mistake, and if they didn't see the mistake, "well, Divil mend 'em for a lot of careless omadhauns!"

On one occasion the driver of my car took away an old waterproof rug belonging to the hotel. We discovered it next day, and when we were passing a week afterwards, returned it, rather to the landlord's dismay. It appears that when he had missed it, he charged it to everyone leaving the hotel next day, and so far had only had one repudiation.

It is only fair to the landlord to say that his difficulty in making out the visitors' bills was genuine, and not done with a view of giving no time for their examination. In fact when thrusting the bill upon the visitors just as they were ready to start, he was always quite content to let them put it in their pockets and send a cheque when they got home.

"Take a good look at it first," he would say. "It's not much out, I'm thinking, but still an' all them long tots is the Divil, and I amn't rightly sure about the drink—I disremember what's gone out of the store-room, and the girl's down in the village and she has the key on her."

CHAPTER VII

THE GUN-BOATS' PART

THROUGHOUT all these years the condition on the west coast had to be very carefully watched during the distress, especially during Trevelyan's experiment. The great difficulty was that it took so long to reach the islands. They were a day's journey from the nearest railway station, and after that a boat had to be found to make a passage across to the islands; so by the time one arrived there after a start from Galway at dawn, night had usually set in, and there was no accommodation where one could get food and a bed.

For the purpose of assisting the civil authority the Admiralty kept gun-boats at Westport and Galway. The *Goshawk*, *Bruiser*, *Orwell* and *Wasp* were employed on this service, and were also used for the movements of the police and for assisting various charitable associations who provided flour and meal for the people. These vessels were quite unsuited to the west coast. They had not sufficient power and rolled horribly. The old *Orwell*, for example, could not do more than about two or three knots against a head wind or a heavy sea. They were officered by a lieutenant-commander, a first and second lieutenant, a doctor and engineer, and carried a crew of fifty or sixty,

all of whom hated the job. Their decks were in a fearful state owing to the islanders coming on board when the vessel came to anchor, and they were such bluff-bowed, barrel-bottomed affairs that, with their deck loads of potato seed or flour, you would have thought that when they started to roll they would never right themselves. There was a dial on the companion-way marking the degrees of the angle of heel, and there was one place on the dial marked "Vanishing Point," and it was very jumpy to see how often the needle was within a hair's breadth of it.

The deck load of potatoes, seeds and meal was sometimes packed above the bulwarks and secured with difficulty. I well remember on one occasion when rounding Slyne Head and it had come on to blow: I was sitting on the lee side of the 4-inch gun, when the rolling was perfectly appalling. At last the skipper hailed me from the bridge: "Robinson, I'll have to heave these damned potatoes of yours overboard; she won't stand it." A green sea, shipped at the moment, half-smothered me, while I waved a hearty concurrence. So twenty tons of potatoes were forthwith consigned to the deep Atlantic.

The bluejackets and marines were a very cheery lot, but on this barren coast they had rather a poor time, as except at Westport or Galway there was no amusement to be gained by going ashore. There was a small cricket club at Westport, and Lieutenant Warden, of H.M.S. *Goshawk*, and I got up an eleven from the ship to accept a challenge from the club. Curiously enough

there were only three of the ship's company who had played the game seriously, so the rest of the eleven were chosen by lot, and a most comical match it proved. The "Goshawks" won the toss and went in first, but we failed to persuade them that the game was not tip and run. If they touched the ball with the bat, off they ran, and if the ball only went a short distance the striker followed it, gave it a supplementary whack, and then resumed his run. The whole side was run out except one, an engineroom artificer, who mowed his own wickets out of the ground right into the arms of point, in a mighty scythe-like attempt to hit a boundary shot to long leg. Their novel ideas on the game while they were at the wickets, strange as they were, were nothing compared to their performances when they were in the field. Every man who fielded a ball invariably shied it at the running batsman as hard as he could, no doubt being accustomed to playing rounders, and only returned it to the bowler or wicket-keeper if no run was attempted.

We had no bowling strength, as Lieutenant Warden and I were quite out of practice, but every bluejacket was convinced he was a born bowler, and after every over they crowded round Warden and implored him to put them on. One stoker, I remember, had a run-saving device which consisted of sending up very slow grubs, following them right up to the opposite wicket and practically snatching the ball off the bat. The batsman complained bitterly that he hadn't

room to hit, as the bowler got in his way, for the bowler occasionally reached the opposite wicket before the ball. We had to take him off at last, leaving him firmly of opinion that we thereby sacrificed the match.

Another bowler pinned his faith to enormously high lobs, as high as ever he could send them. Most of them went far up over the head of the batsman and into the hands of long-leg or long-stop, but one never-to be-forgotten master-shot, the highest of all, actually dropped on the top of the wicket, amidst uproarious applause of the "Goshawks." He got no more wickets, but as a counterbalancing advantage for keeping him on, he pointed out that it was impossible to make runs off him, as the batsman couldn't get near the ball.

In spite of the subtleties of the "Goshawks," their cricket form and brain-waves on the subject of bowling, the town club scored a victory.

The bluejackets on H.M.S. *Wasp* were a most undaunted lot when any form of sport was concerned, and were ready to attempt anything. In fact on one memorable occasion I saw one of them, who I do not believe knew a horse from a cow, actually start to ride a race.

Mulranny Regatta—so called because it takes place on a flat sandy beach after the tide has gone out—consists exclusively of horse and bicycle races. Horses are taken out of the cars which bring the visitors, and are entered for races, and practically every animal in the district able to gallop is pressed into the sport. The *Wasp* was on her way to Clare Island on one occasion when

the Mulranny Regatta was in full swing, so we stopped for a few hours, and a number of liberty men were allowed ashore in the cutter. Some of the officers and I followed afterwards in the gig and found a tremendous commotion going on owing to the favourite for the first race—a smart little cob rejoicing in the name of "Flat Porther"—being without a jockey, her owner having been found drunk and speechless in a booth. His wife and friends were furious, and above the clamour we heard the voice of a bluejacket named Robins loudly pressing his services, declaring that he "knew 'ow to ride a 'orse," and that he "brought Capt. Annesley's 'orse for him from the stables to the meet, and the grooms that were out said they 'adn't seen no better ridin'—not in their time."

The owner's representatives were entirely convinced, and Robins turned up his sleeves, tied a bit of rope round his ankles, mounted his steed, and was led to the starting post. The horses got well away and Flat Porther shot ahead from them all like an arrow from a bow, when it was seen that the naval exponent of the *haute école* was holding tight to the mane and swaying about from side to side in the most perilous way, till they came to the first turning post, when Flat Porther swung round it at such an angle that he flung Robins off at a tangent on to his back in the sand close to where Lieutenant Guppy and I were standing. Flat Porther then faced about, charged the crowd, and ended his performance by bolting into a roulette tent.

Guppy picked up Robins, who explained that he had been "took aback" at the starting post, that he "weren't quite ready," and his mount had "gone away with a free sheet and gev a lee lurch at the mark post, and had sent him over the starboard side."

"But I thought you said you knew how to ride," said Guppy.

"So I do," said Robins, "but I don't know 'ow to ride *not to gallop*"!

Some of the officials were foolish enough to grouse about how the officers failed to fall in with their plans, and one of the inspectors employed by Mr. Tuke actually made a complaint in writing which went to the Admiralty, whereupon the Admiralty withdrew the vessels altogether from the service, saying as they were apparently not giving satisfaction there was nothing else for them to do. Mr. Tuke, whose chief inspector was making extensive use of them, wrote a long expostulation, demanding that the boats should be restored. It was a plausible letter, and he thought he had knocked the Admiralty into a cocked hat; but all he got in reply was a very short letter from Cooper Key saying the gun-boats were of very little use and were "Nothing but bug traps."

I was with Tuke when he got this reply. It seemed to disconcert him to an absurd extent. He kept walking about the room with the letter in his hand, ejaculating solemnly to himself: "Bug traps! Bug traps! That's no reply to my argument. That's an extraordinary thing for the Lord of the Admiralty to rely on." However,

he could do nothing more, and the matter ended.

My mission of organizing relief works was deemed to be sufficiently important to warrant an exception to the rule; but instead of a gun-boat with a Naval officer, a much more suitable vessel was sent to me—H.M.S. *Redwing*, a revenue cruiser. Her captain had been in command of a revenue cutter previously, and she had no lieutenants, only a first mate, second mate, and engineer. The engineer told me confidentially that he was the only Naval officer on board, and that he did not like the job, as the captain was a very rough diamond. I stupidly said to the captain something about Mackay being a Naval officer, whereupon he informed me, with much emphasis, that "Mackay might be a Naval officer, and the only Naval officer on board, but if I says to him, 'Mackay, get steam up,' and if he don't do it, I b—— soon let him know who's the boss."

The *Redwing* had a deck-house where the other gun-boats had a 4-inch gun, and in this little cabin I messed with Captain Sully, a delightful old salt and a consummate sailor, with the most wonderful command of forcible language I ever heard. I was in for a six weeks' cruise, from December to the middle of January, and the Admiralty asked the Local Government Board to fix the amount I was to pay Mr. Sully for mess. As I was getting £1 1s. a day subsistence, the Local Government Board fixed 15s. for messing, to the intense delight of Mr. Sully, who had expected he would have

to grub me for about 15s. a week. He evidently thought I was going to live on champagne, and came to me at the Galway Hotel with a price list of wines, and was prepared to suggest what he considered would be a reasonable limit in the way of drinks. But on hearing that I was a teetotaller at the time, he was almost staggered at his good fortune, and warned me that the trip would take much longer than I expected, for he was not going to risk his ship putting to sea in bad weather "not for nobody whatsoever."

He had no cook for his own mess, but he had purchased a cookery book, and about midday he would come down off the bridge to his deck-house with his own sailor servant, an excellent creature, Farrell by name, who would remove the cloth from the table. With his cookery book open on the table he would attempt entrées and similar things suitable to a person of such high degree as he was convinced I was from the fact that I was able to pay 15s. a day mess bill. Sometimes in bad weather when he could not leave the bridge, he used to walk up and down and bellow instructions to Farrell through the speaking trumpet.

"Farrell, does Mr. Robinson say soup to-day?" he would roar. Farrell having raised his hand as a signal of assent, the captain would shout back: "No. 27 in the book." Whereupon Farrell would vanish, to reappear only when No. 27 soup and the rest of the menu was on the table. Certainly "No. 27" was an amazing decoction. It tasted different each time it appeared, sometimes thick and sometimes clear, sometimes white and some-

times mahogany brown. It usually had a suspicion of a tarred-rope taste and was always full of egg-shells. The captain dined with me each day, and he revelled in No. 27. He didn't care what it tasted like, it was sufficient for him that it was drawn up, as he put it, "according to chart." We had the kaleidoscopic No. 27 so often that I got hold of the book one day and looked it up to see what I was living on. I found it was recorded as "Useful soup for benevolent purposes."

There was a tremendous sameness about the food. Sometimes we got fish, but every night for the whole six weeks we had tapioca pudding, and the captain insisted every time it came to the table that "Tabbyogre was good for the system." The entrées which Farrell and he attempted between them were perfectly appalling, but as they were constructed out of compliment to me I was obliged to taste them.

Since he had left the revenue cutter and got the rise in life in the command of a fine steamer, he and his mates were tremendous sticklers for proper form and for knowing what was *comme il faut* for Naval officers. In fact, "ettikay," as they called it, became a perfect mania with them, and after dinner at anchor when the cloth was cleared the captain often sent for the mates and engineer and would propound "hard cases" on points of etiquette as we sat round the table. He used for his guide and mentor on the subject an amazing old tattered book, which I sometimes think must have been intended to be comic, as it presupposed such utterly absurd situations,

and gave instructions as to what was to be done and what to be avoided when they arose.

For example, if you were on top of an omnibus and saw a duchess in the street, you could not with propriety wave your umbrella at her, no matter what terms you were on with her. Another thing was that you must not ask the butler at soup for a toothpick when dining with strangers. There were lots of these "hard cases," and the captain used to rule a sheet of paper and put all our names down and award marks in accordance with our replies to the queries put. There was one which made such an impression on me that I took a pencil note of it, and I remember it to this day. We were all sitting round the table, the paper was ruled, and the captain began:

"Now, Mackay, we'll take you first. If you was walking in a field with a young lady with 'oom you was but slightly acquainted and she was to set down on the grass, what should you do?"

Mackay paused to try and imagine what his feelings and intentions should be in such a peculiar eventuality, and then replied, "I'd offer to git her a chair."

"Um, ah!" said the skipper; "not bad, but you might 'ave to walk a couple of miles to get one, and it wouldn't look shipshape for an officer of one of Her Majesty's finest cruisers to be walking about the countryside luggin' a chair after him. Besides, the damage might have been done by that time. Her stern might have got wet before you got back. However, it's a thoughtful-like thing, and I'll give you five marks.

"Now, Mr. Trelawney, what do you say?"

"Well," said Trelawney, "I'd argify with her agin it, and if words wouldn't move her I'd take off my coat and give it to her to sit on."

The captain thought very deeply. "Well, I don't think that's the answer, but it would be a delicate kind of thing to do, and I'll give you seven.

"Now, Mr. Lyons, you're next."

"I'd ax the young lady for to get up and run me a race," said the plump little second mate.

"Go on," said the skipper; "how could you expect a lady with 'oom you were but slightly acquainted to start runnin' races with a pot-bellied little bloke like you?"

Then after we'd all offered our solutions to the hard case, the key was consulted at the end of the book and the skipper announced what the canons of refined society ordained as the duty of the male escort if a lady of high degree took it into her head suddenly to sit down on the grass. "The gentleman," said the skipper, "must remain standing till the lady axes him for to sit down."

"Of course, of course," said the mate; "fools we were not to have seen it."

One trouble we had in these cruises was that the bluejacket seemed to think the West of Ireland was an absolutely foreign and savage country, and there were no such things as laws relating to trespass, poaching, etc. I had a most horrifying experience of this one day. It was blowing hard, with a heavy Atlantic swell, on the 23rd December, when we ran into Ballinakil Bay for shelter. As Christ-

mas was coming on, the captain, who by the way was exactly like Father Christmas himself in appearance, determined to spend Christmas Eve in decorating the ship with holly and ivy from truck to keel.

The ship, in addition to the captain's gig, had two cruelly heavy boats which broke the backs of their crew to row, the cutter being dubbed by the crew "the Wilful Murder" and the launch by the somewhat irreverent title of "the Agony and Bloody Sweat." Nearly the whole ship's company were sent off with these two boats after dinner, with instructions to bring them back full up of holly and evergreens. It was in vain that I pointed out that on this barren shore there was no green stuff to be got for love or money, no wood, nothing but bare mountain and rocks and heather browned and blighted by the salt spray; also that the two-mile pull back in the "Wilful Murder" and the "Agony" against the gale would about finish the crew.

The captain would not listen to me; the lug sails were hoisted, the boats flew off before the wind and soon disappeared. The only house in this district belonged to a pompous little septuagenarian from the north named Franky Gibson, with a young girl-wife. I warned them it was no use asking him to help them to find green stuff, as he would not allow an able-bodied man within a mile of his place. It was late in the evening and quite dark when we heard the clump of the rowlocks and the encouraging cries of the mate at the tiller to the tired rowers, and they came

alongside utterly dead-beat with the boats literally crammed with green stuff.

"There weren't no difficulty," said the mate. "Why, we found all that green stuff on a mountain close to the road as handy as you like."

A close inspection revealed that they were all young Scotch firs, two or three feet high, and it suddenly dawned upon me that the crew had evidently carried off Franky Gibson's new plantation. I begged the captain for any sake to clear out before Franky woke at dawn and saw his naked mountain-side. So early next morning we pulled out and slipped into Killery Harbour, where Franky's new plantation spread itself up the masts, along the yards and bulwarks, and in a beautiful design, "God Bless Our Home," in semicircle in front of the forecastle.

Campbell-Bannerman succeeded Trevelyan for a short period, and he was a great change after his highly-strung predecessor. He had all the temperamental qualities which serve to make a good Chief Secretary; he was stolid, complacent, humorous, knew his own mind, and, so far as the taunts and attacks of the Irish members were concerned, he had a hide like a rhinoceros. Nothing put him out; in fact, the attacks of the Irish members seemed to amuse him immensely and keep him in good humour. The heads of departments regarded him as a rock of common sense and about as good a Chief as they could wish for and much regretted his departure upon the defeat of Gladstone's Government in 1885.

CHAPTER VIII

LORD CARNARVON

IN that year I left the West to take charge of the Dublin district, to my profound grief, as I had come to love those western people and had become so well known to them in connexion with the administration of measures of relief that I was sure of a warm welcome in every part of my district. Among the clergy I made many lifelong friends; taking them as a whole, I found them always glad to be helpful, and though they had to march with the popular side in politics or lose their influence over the people altogether, they had their welfare at heart and did their best to keep them out of trouble. It is true they would humbug the Government and its officials in the most barefaced way in the furtherance of any scheme for the help of their flocks, but always with such a profound conviction of the rectitude of their efforts to deceive in such a cause, that even when bowled out in their little deceptions they almost seemed to expect sympathy for their failure to mislead.

There were a lot of young firebrands among the curates, but the old parish priests were a hospitable, kindly folk, and all for obedience to the law.

After I left the West my intimate acquaintance with the country led to my being frequently summoned for consultation with Lord Carnarvon on questions of relief administration in the congested districts, and occasionally being dispatched there on special missions. Lady Carnarvon took the greatest interest in the western peasantry, and had all sorts of schemes for brightening their home life; but the shortness of her stay precluded her from carrying them into effect. Her schemes were perhaps more suitable for English villages than for western mud cabins, but at all events she was not so far out in her ideas as the ladies of one of the Duchess of Marlborough's committees, who once sent me a huge bale of children's clothing for the Inishkea islanders, which I took out to them in H.M.S. *Goshawk*. They were nearly all "Little Lord Fauntleroy" suits, with a certain number of others labelled as "Bon Ton" and "Latest from Paris." The poor little tattered urchins, who had never worn anything but home-made flannel petticoats, for a long time did not know how to get into them; and I shall never forget the incongruity of the vision which met my eyes on going into a cabin from which fearful yells were coming, and finding a "Little Lord Fauntleroy" and a "Bon Ton" screaming with agitation over the family cow, which was having difficulty with the birth of a calf at one end of the cabin, and which the whole family were doing their best to drag into the light of day.

I remember one very curious event which I really think has no parallel in the history of Irish distress,

by which a famine was averted in a couple of hours without any step to that end being taken by the Government. Realizing the new Viceroy's good will towards the small farmers in the West, a distress agitation was worked up in County Mayo, and the start was arranged to be made in the Island of Achill, where the holdings are very small and the people all migratory labourers. The agitation took the usual course—first the alarmist resolutions of boards of guardians, next the questions in the House of Commons, then the visit to the island of special commissioners of the Nationalist newspapers to write harrowing descriptions of the distress, and then, when the mind of the Government had become receptive to nervous impressions, Father Healy of Achill, a wild, emotional creature, came up to Dublin determined to see Lord Carnarvon and make an appeal to him in person.

He wrote and begged for an interview, and was accorded one. He drove out and was met at the Lodge by a gorgeous footman in gold lace and plush, and concluding that so splendid a person could be none other than the Viceroy himself, he plumped down on his knees before him and cried out that his people were perishing of the hunger and must be saved. The footman was horribly frightened, and stammered out that His Excellency would be down in a minute, and handed him over to Ormsby Gore.

At last he was shown in by Ormsby Gore, but Healy, who expected to see some imposing figure in robes of State, could scarcely bring himself

to believe that this ordinary looking little man in a blue serge suit was the Viceroy. However, he realized it after a time when he noticed the deference shown him by his staff, and bursting into tears he besought the Lord Lieutenant to save the lives of his people, who were absolutely *in extremis*. He worked up such a display of emotion that Lord Carnarvon was quite taken in and promised to send down an official to make inquiries, and that if the priest's statements were verified, relief measures would be introduced forthwith. Father Healy insisted on knowing the day of the official's visit, and was assured that he would start by the first train in the morning. This did not at all suit Healy, who had certain preparations to make, so he said that if the official would put it off till the following Monday it would be more convenient, as he would be there himself and would be able to give the official any help he required in ascertaining facts; he also asked that the official would try and be there by about noon. Lord Carnarvon, not realizing the real object of all these suggestions, promised that everything should be as the priest desired. He then notified the Local Government Board of the undertaking he had given, and suggested that as I knew the island so well I should be sent to make the inquiry.

Meanwhile Healy had got home and made his plans. He had arranged that all the thinnest people in the island should be at Achill Sound in rags and tatters, outside Ginnely's Hotel, to meet me upon my arrival on Monday. The people

were all paraded after chapel and the leanest and most sickly selected. They were instructed to be lying about in listless attitudes, leaning up against walls, too utterly weary even to speak except to whisper to the Government official that they were starving.

Accordingly on Monday morning at 11 o'clock from all parts of the island the procession of the leanest inhabitants trooped up to the Sound, took off as much of their clothing as decency would permit, ranged themselves along the road in attitudes of the deepest dejection, and waited for my arrival. Unfortunately for them the wheeler of my tandem car cast a shoe outside Newport and we were delayed nearly an hour at the forge, and it was 1 o'clock by the time I reached the Sound. Meanwhile the thinnest inhabitants had started discussing some burning question about a dispute between the Sweenys and the Lavelles, and high words followed; words led to threats, threats led to blows, and by the time I arrived a most furious faction fight was raging with sticks and fists and the wildest uproar.

The moment the car pulled up a man picked himself up off the ground and rushing up to me said, "I beg your honour's pardon, but will ye tell me is there a hole in my head?" I passed my hand over his scalp and was horrified to feel one of my fingers sink into an orifice in his skull about the size of a large thimble. "I'm afraid there is, my poor man," I said. He gave a wild cry and shouted something about "That divil there," and seizing his shillelagh went stealthily on tiptoe up

to a man who was fighting with his back turned and gave him a whack on the skull that bowled him over like a ninepin.

For a full half-hour after my arrival the "starving" islanders fought on like wild cats, and it was late in the afternoon before the last of the combatants was taken away in a donkey-cart. It was too late for me to do any work, so I spent the evening quietly in the hotel.

The following morning after the people had returned from Mass I proceeded to make my investigations. The priest was so furious and ashamed that he would not even see me, and the people slammed their doors in my face whenever I tried to enter their cottages.

The whole island population was utterly shamefaced, and I returned to Dublin next day, and not a word was ever heard again of famine in Achill, or anywhere else during the rest of Lord Carnarvon's viceroyalty.

Lord Carnarvon was an excellent Viceroy. I made one trip with him to the West, where his speeches were received with enthusiasm. He had the most marvellous knack of saying what sounded a very great deal but which when analysed meant absolutely nothing at all, and for an English statesman charged with the government of Ireland I cannot imagine any greater gift.

It is very curious how the actual words in a speech are often a secondary consideration if the manner and intonation of the orator is sufficiently impressive. Sir John Colomb, M.P. for Grimsby, who was on the Boundaries Appeal Commission

with me, told me that there was a supporter of his who always ended up his speech with a flowery peroration which invariably brought down the house, and aroused tremendous cheering in spite of its absurd and astounding language. It was this: "We shall maintain—we are firmly determined to maintain—while there is breath in our bodies—by every means in our power, the integrity of our Empire—our Queen—and our God."

Lord Salisbury's seven months of administration was not eventful for Ireland. The country was prosperous and Sir William Hart Dyke, the Chief Secretary, left no mark of any kind. My memory of him is very faint, as I only saw him once. He came to the Lodge in the park in the autumn and gave a few regulation dinners. Officials found him pleasant but not very much interested, and he seemed glad to get away and make room for W. H. Smith, whose service was the shortest on record, as the Government went out a couple of days after he was sworn in.

CHAPTER IX

JOHN MORLEY

WHEN Gladstone's Government came in, with the Aberdeens at the Viceregal Lodge and John Morley as Chief Secretary, the country was soon plunged into all the excitement of a Home Rule Bill, which occupied the entire thoughts of the nation to the exclusion of everything else, except in the distressful West, where once more the cry of famine was raised.

A tourist I met in Mulrany was walking down the road with me and he stopped to talk to a man who was trenching his potatoes. "Will there be a famine this year, do you suppose?" he asked. The man looked rather surprised at the question. "Why not?" he said. He had good grounds for his optimism, with a Government pledged to govern according to Irish ideas and supported and advised by the Irish members, who wanted to see English gold circulating in Ireland. Had they not also a sympathetic Chief Secretary and a partial failure of the potato crop, and the people "no better off than ever they were"?

Hope springs eternal in the human breast, and with such a prospect how could the most evil-disposed person succeed in depriving the farmers of their famine, which heretofore had always meant free grants for work, relief, and seed potatoes?

Morley could not have stood out against the assurances of his political supporters to the effect that the resources of the Poor Law must be supplemented to meet distress, and the sum of £60,000 was accordingly voted for the purpose and an equal sum for the construction of fishery piers and harbours.

How to apply the relief money was indeed a perplexing question. The Local Government Board were strongly of opinion that if it were given as outdoor relief, without any test of destitution, it would be difficult to keep it within reasonable limits. But Morley considered the board were out of date in their ideas, and he finally decided that the guardians were to be authorized by a temporary Distress Act to give outdoor relief to land-holders and that the £60,000 was to be applied in aid of the guardians' expenditure under this head.

This welcome intelligence led to a mad scramble for the money. Boards of guardians, believing it was a case of first come first served, gave outdoor relief broadcast and practically refused no one, never doubting for a moment that the friendly Government would increase the £60,000 to whatever sum was necessary to cover total expenditure. The Local Government Board warned them that they had no grounds for this supposition, but this assurance was taken to be nothing more than an indication of the board's failure to understand the financial situation, and no attention whatever was paid to it.

And then the blow fell. The Government went

out on the Home Rule Bill and the new Government announced that they had not the least intention of increasing the grant. They believed there had been a great deal of abuse, and they appointed a commission to inquire into the administration of the Act by the guardians. The commissioners were Christopher Redington and myself. We found that the administration of the outdoor relief had been inordinately extravagant and careless. In two unions the returns of persons relieved actually exceeded the total population of the unions, and the following extract from my notes taken at one large union gives a fair idea of the casual way in which things were managed. One of the commissioners asked the following questions of a relieving officer who was examined:

Q. "I see you struck 7,000 people off the relief on the 25th of March; they were not put on the lists again till three weeks later. How is that?"

Witness. "Me uncle died that day."

Q. "How did your uncle's death diminish the poverty for so long a period, and enable you to stop supplies to 7,000 people?"

Witness. "It was the way I hadn't time to attend to them."

Q. "Were they destitute when you put them on the relief lists?"

Witness. "Troth they were, entirely."

Q. "Did any harm come to them when you stopped the three weeks?"

Witness. "Sorra harm then, nothing only a disappointment."

The disclosures of the commission were such

that the Government declared that they felt precluded from asking Parliament to intervene, and it was accordingly intimated to these unions that they might spread the cost of relief, over and above their share of the grant, over a term of years but the Treasury would not contribute one penny for the purpose of relieving the burden. It took these unions many years to wipe off the debt, but it was a very wholesome lesson of what may follow corrupt administration.

A very tragic event happened about this time in the Westport Union. A hooker crammed with migratory labourers from Achill, men and women, was running up before the wind through the channel between Inisyre and Westport. In one of the deep pools outside Westport the Glasgow steamer, which was to take the migrants to Scotland, was lying at anchor waiting for the flood tide to enable her to get alongside the quay, and as the hooker passed the steamer the whole crowd on board stepped across to the other side to take a look at her. The boom jibbed over and she capsized, imprisoning all the passengers under the mainsail, and although the ballast dropped out and the boat did not sink, she lay on her side and with very few exceptions the people were drowned. A large fund was collected for the survivors, and the saddest job ever I had was that of proceeding to their homes and preparing lists of the families bereaved, for the purpose of finding out whether the people drowned were the heads of the families—the chief breadwinners, in fact—or were dependants, it being the intention that the grants for the

breadwinners were to be substantially larger than those of the sons and daughters who had been lost.

I arrived in the island on the eve of the funerals, and the bodies were all laid out in the little cabins with the people crying and keening round them.

It showed the curious mentality of the people that they all seemed to think that the relatives of those who were in the accident but whose lives were saved had just as good a claim for the benevolent grant as the relatives of those who were lost. When I said that it was very doubtful if this would be agreed to, much commiseration was expressed for the survivors who, it was said, should not be penalized in this way because they had managed to save their lives.

I remember going into one cabin where a widow was weeping piteously over her only son, whose body was lying under a sheet on the bed. He was her sole support, she said, and I took all particulars and assured her that I would recommend the maximum grant. Before leaving the cabin I went to the bed and gently lifted the corner of the sheet to look at the dead face. I was much taken aback when a bright blue eye met mine and regarded me with an expression of the deepest anxiety. I didn't grasp what this meant at first, and shouted joyfully to the mother that the boy had come to. To my surprise she began to cry, and seizing a stick fell upon him and began to beat him unmercifully. "You lazy, idle ragamuffin," she said; "isn't that a nice way to be serving your poor old mother?" Finally

he leaped off the bed and sped down the village, and she after him.

But the point was that the people quite took her part. "It's a bad thing for her surely," they said seriously. "She's a hardworking, poor, industrious woman, and the boy was in the water for nearly an hour and ought to get the grant."

There was one phase of distress in the West which admitted of no deception, and which was always a source of considerable anxiety to the Local Government Board. This was the typhus fever. It was generally concealed by the people in whose houses it broke out, as they were shunned by their neighbours, their children were not allowed into the schools, shops or churches, and the patients themselves were desperately afraid of being moved to hospital, as they had a superstition that if they left their homes with the disease they would never return alive. On the mainland we were able to take measures for the proper treatment of the sufferers, and for the prevention of the spread of the disease, but the islands were a real trouble.

We had one bad outbreak in the Inishkea Islands which ran like wildfire through the whole population. Not a house escaped and the mortality was dreadful. The doctor and the nurse we sent out there died, and the difficulty in transporting medicines, provisions and necessaries was almost insuperable until the Admiralty lent us H.M.S. *Albacore* for the purpose. Although the people were in a state of abject terror as death after death occurred, it was impossible to make them

understand the risks of infection. Our medical inspector brought out a supply of woven wire mattresses and then ordered the old straw beds, on which people had lain with the typhus, to be taken out and thrown into a pit and buried; but when he returned a few days afterwards, he found that the people had dug up the old disease-sodden beds, had brought them back to their houses, and continued to use them. They had a firm idea that ill luck would befall the house if the family beds were thrown aside.

After much argument they agreed to allow the beds to be taken out and disinfected. These were, therefore, all brought to a field at the back of the village, and the inspector produced his disinfectant in the shape of a barrel of paraffin, with which he saturated the pile. Then, unobserved by the people, he threw in a lighted match which sent up the whole in a roar of flame which speedily reduced them to ashes, while the people stood around dismayed, weeping and wailing and beating their breasts with wild lamentations.

"It's gone, it's gone, the bed me ould man brought me to on me wedding night, the bed where Shamus and Nora were born to me, the bed where me father and mother slept and died. What'll I do at all, at all?" and so forth.

They would not be consoled; nothing our staff had done for them at the risk of their lives could wipe out this reckless destruction of their beds, which they declared would call down the vengeance of Heaven upon the perpetrators of the outrage.

Even when the outbreak was got under, and the houses were whitewashed and fumigated, and new beds and bedding provided, and our inspector, Dr. Edgar Flinn, and the nurses who had snatched them from the jaws of death were taking their departure, the episode of the beds was not forgotten, and it was a sullen crowd that stood around to see them embark. Dr. Flinn bade them good-bye with a few sympathetic words about the losses they had sustained, and with a warning note as to sanitary precautions for the future. All the reply he got from the chief man of the islands was: "You and your gang, you think you know everything, but I tell you you do not."

Times have improved with these islanders. When I last visited them a flourishing whale fishery had been established on the South Island which was providing employment at high wages for all. The Norwegian who was running it told me he found the people very hard to manage. He instanced the fact that if any of the workers took sick, he paid them full wages till they recovered, but on one occasion when an unusually large number of fish had been towed in, he had to keep as many men working overtime as were willing to work late hours, whereupon all the sick men sat up in bed and shouted for overtime payments also.

Morley was rather curt with the Irish officials, probably because, except in the case of Sir Robert Hamilton, they were all in a state of serious anxiety over their prospects, and although

they helped him and gave him every assistance he demanded, he resented their misgivings and lack of enthusiasm over the Home Rule Bill, and was rather inclined to be impatient and sarcastic.

However, he was in London most of his time and we did not see much of him, and as the country was quiet the administration of public departments gave him very little trouble. There was a tremendously active propaganda set on foot for the purpose of showing the horrors which would follow if the Home Rule Bill did not pass, and undoubtedly many people were very apprehensive lest the bitter disappointment of the nation would mean a return to the terrorism of 1881. The Chief Secretary himself was so menacing in his observations on the subject that it almost looked like an incitement to the people to make things hot if the Bill were thrown out. However, when this happened on the second reading nothing serious took place. Nationalist papers wrote fiery leaders, local authorities passed hair-raising resolutions, Irish members were prophetic of disaster, but in the country nothing happened; there were no shootings or burnings or outrages as in 1881.

The people were not disposed to be led by agitators into personal risks for a sentimental grievance which did not affect their pockets. In 1881 it was quite different; then they were ruined and desperate, and they sheltered themselves under the wing of the Land League, which was their only hope and defence. But now the country was prosperous, and the rejection of the Bill was met with words, not deeds, and the people

left it to their members to show by Parliamentary agitation that the country would be ungovernable under the old English law.

The people were now avowed Home Rulers, but all the same they wished to return to the London Parliament representatives whose Home Rule pledges required that they should bleed the British taxpayer to the uttermost farthing for the benefit of Ireland till England gave them a Parliament of their own. But I do not think they were in any great hurry to dissolve partnership; they were quite satisfied with the position of being under the British Parliament so long as the Irish members were masters of the situation to the extent that they were under Gladstone's administration.

As to their feelings over the ancient history of wrongs inflicted on Ireland in the past, I believe these were only skin-deep. I have mixed with them for forty years, and have travelled in all parts of the country with English members of Parliament and Chief Secretaries, and I have never seen the slightest indication that beneath their natural courtesy, which they invariably extend to English officials and English visitors, there was any undercurrent of real ill-will.

CHAPTER X

SIR MICHAEL HICKS-BEACH AND SIR REDVERS BULLER; ARTHUR BALFOUR AND SIR JOSEPH WEST RIDGEWAY

THE accession to power of the Conservative Party after the defeat of the Home Rule Bill brought to Ireland its second infliction of Sir Michael Hicks-Beach, and the twelve years which had passed since he held office had not mellowed his temper, or made him a pleasanter man to work with. What made things even more uncomfortable was that he got rid of the level-headed Under-Secretary, Sir R. Hamilton, and replaced him by Sir Redvers Buller, who may or may not have been a good general, but he certainly struck me as the worst Under-Secretary that Ireland had ever experienced in my time. He was brusque, hot-headed, and always ready to jump to hasty conclusions. He had a profound belief in his own infallibility, and thought it was a sign of strength and determination to sit in his office in the Castle and write sneering comments upon the files of other departments which were submitted to the Irish Government. During the whole of his time in Ireland I never heard of any department receiving helpful suggestions from him. He showed nothing but an inherent desire to find fault with anything they proposed.

"This is a fair example of the way the Local Government Board does its business," is a specimen of the comments he made on our files; but as he was never able to suggest any alternative course, we knew what his criticisms were worth.

Chief Justice Morris gave him a great setting-down once and made him a perfect laughing-stock. It happened in this way. Upon some police file relating to the agitation in Kerry, Buller wrote a minute to the effect that the disturbed state of this part of the country was entirely due to the "ridiculously inadequate penalties inflicted by Chief Justice Morris on the Rathmore prisoners."

Some point subsequently arose with respect to these trials and it became necessary to refer the file to the Chief Justice for his advice; whoever sent it to him failed to notice Buller's minute and omitted to detach it.

Morris saw it, however, and returned it to the Castle with this remark:

"I do not know whether I was expected to see everything on this file, but I noticed on it a remark from the Under-Secretary criticizing my sentences on the Rathmore prisoners. I would have this warrior to know that the penalties which I inflicted and which he describes as ridiculously inadequate were the very highest penalties allowed by law."

This minute of the Lord Chief Justice was the joke of the day, and much weakened Buller's prestige.

The parliamentary agitation over the rejection

of the Home Rule Bill was soon set on foot. The Irish members, including some new and able recruits, returned to Parliament bitter and resentful at the decision of the English electorate which had given the Government a certain tenure of office for six years. They had little hope of being able to shake their position or influence their policy, and their only course was war, war to the knife, war in the shape of blind obstruction, abuse, attacks upon the Irish administration, and, as one of their members described it, " poison-mad pig-headed fighting."

Sir Michael Hicks-Beach's irascibility and Buller's hasty conclusions made them the worst possible combination for facing the attacks of the Irish battalions, and under the former's nervous irritability the Irish officials were losing heart. The country was fast becoming in a very dangerous state, and though Hicks-Beach made a great show of firmness it was plain to everyone that he was badly rattled, and it was with intense relief that the Irish officials heard that he and Buller were to clear out to make room for Arthur Balfour, with Sir Joseph West Ridgeway as his Under-Secretary.

None of us civil servants knew much about their new Chief except that he was a member of the Fourth Party and had the ear of the House of Commons, but the impression on our minds was that he was more or less of a doctrinaire and was not built of the material likely to stand the rough-and-tumble of a scrimmage with the infuriated Irish political party. However, we knew he was Lord Salisbury's nephew, and guessed that the

Premier would not have allowed him into the scrum unless he knew that he had plenty of grit. So we hoped for the best and awaited his coming, though not without a good deal of trepidation.

It was a very curious thing—in fact, one of the most striking of my life experiences—how sudden and bracing was the effect of the new Chief Secretary. He bore no resemblance in mind or temperament to what our fancies had painted him. He was so cheerful, and so absolutely imperturbable in the gravest and most critical situations, that he infused a new spirit in the Irish police and officials before he had been a month in the country, and they perceived at once that if they did their level best to help the Irish Government and were straightforward and careful nothing could harm them.

Many of the Irish officials, though they would have walked on their heads for Mr. Balfour, were never quite at their ease with him. In the first place he disconcerted them extremely by seeming to know everything they wanted to say almost before they got it out of their mouths. If there was a weak point in their arguments he was on to it like a shot, and they were bogged before they knew where they were. If, on the other hand, their suggestions were sound, he generally found reasons for supporting them which, to their chagrin, were stronger and more convincing than those they had thought of themselves.

My colleague, George Morris, always dreaded having to interview him. He was very slow and deliberate in his thoughts, and Balfour's lightning

recognition of what was in his mind confused him terribly.

It was these rapier thrusts which made Balfour's retorts so exasperating to the Irish members and the Press, and they felt deeply that they never succeeded in making him lose his easy-going insouciance. He did not trouble in the least about the Press attacks on himself; indeed, I do not believe he ever read them. There was one thing he did, with regard to Press calumny upon his acts or policy, which no other Chief Secretary ever resorted to, and I could never understand why, as it enhanced Balfour's success and made his opponents look exceedingly foolish. Whenever gross misstatements appeared in the Press about the action of the Government, he would have a letter written next day to the morning papers setting forth the facts and turning the authors of the misstatements into utter ridicule. He put George Wyndham on to this job, and right well he did it; and so laughable were the expositions of the lies by Wyndham that many people got into the habit, when opening their papers in the morning, of glancing down the columns first of all to see whether there was another Wyndham letter. I think the reason no other Chief Secretary did this must have been that it required a man with the special gifts of George Wyndham to pick out the cases to which a telling rejoinder could be made, and to make it with force and hilarity; and such men are not easy to find.

Balfour's rapidity of action often made him unpopular with people who had axes of their own

to grind. As an illustration of what I mean I will mention one incident which occurred while the relief operations were on. A parish priest from the south—a real good sort in his way, but old-fashioned in his ideas—told me one day that while he admired Balfour for his forcefulness and his courage, he considered that there was one weak point about him, and that was that he was not quite straight—in point of fact, that he was as crooked as a ram's horn—and he himself had experience of this. I was much surprised, and said that I had always imagined that Balfour's bitterest opponents would always agree that he was a straight fighter.

"Well, you're wrong," said the priest. "Listen to this: I wanted some work started in my parish and I went up to Dublin to see him, and sent in my name and he saw me at once. Well, I told him the way we were down here and the awful distress we were in, and how the people were perishing with the hunger and the like of that, and of course, don't you know, I made the strongest case for them that I could. There is no good coming up to see a Chief Secretary if you don't make up your mind to convince him, don't you understand? He said he would attend to the matter, and talked to me for a while and was most agreeable. Well, sir, I went home and two days after, when I got to the presbytery, the servant girl told me that there was a gentleman waiting inside for me. I went in, and there was Colonel Kirkwood with a shorthand note of everything I had said to Balfour, word for word, waiting

for me to come out with him and point him out the houses of the people whom I had mentioned to be dying for want of food. Now, sir, was that straight? Was it fair? Was it honest?"

"But, Father F——," I argued, "might he not have sent Kirkwood with a verbatim note of your statement because he believed what you said and wanted to give suitable relief?"

"Well, even so," said the P.P., "it wasn't a case for shorthand notes, and anyway I saw no reporter in the room, and the whole transaction left me with the very unpleasant feeling of having been tricked."

When one contrasts the administration of Arthur Balfour with that of other Chief Secretaries in Ireland, it is only right to take into account that probably no other Chief Secretary ever had the Treasury under his thumb in the same way that Arthur Balfour had. The permanent officials of the Treasury have always hated the name of Ireland. They seemed to consider that Irish Chief Secretaries went to too great lengths to propitiate Irish members, and did not hesitate to let the Treasury in for unnecessary expenditure if they could make things easier for themselves in the House of Commons. It was because of this that the bristles of the young watch-puppies of the Treasury would stand up like the fretful porcupine when schemes from Irish departments came before them. The Treasury clerk dealing with Ireland, though he could not sanction proposals for expenditure in Ireland off his own bat, could safely make a minute to the effect that

their Lordships could not see their way to consent to them. The Permanent Secretary or Assistant Secretary who signs the letters conveying my Lords' decisions passed this as a matter of course, and the refusal would go forward to the Irish Office. If a Chief Secretary was keenly anxious about it he would have to write again, pressing it upon their Lordships, and then the Treasury officials would have to fight their corner against him. If he stuck to it he generally gained his point in the long run, but he would probably have had to make it a personal matter with the Parliamentary Secretary or the Chancellor of the Exchequer. He might do this once in a way, but he could not go on doing it. He could not waste his influence upon small things and make himself a nuisance by worrying the Parliamentary Secretary over every decision of the Treasury officials. He had to reserve his heavy artillery for really important matters of policy. The result was that the average Chief Secretary found himself hampered by the Treasury in a number of small things which really ought to have been done for the good of the country, and which would have added very much to his prestige and influence if he could have got them done.

Arthur Balfour, of all the Chief Secretaries I have known, was absolutely free from this disability. His success in Ireland was the most conspicuous feature of Lord Salisbury's administration, and the permanent Treasury officials took good care not to risk a snub from Goschen by getting him into trouble by interference with

Arthur Balfour. The following conversation which took place while I was in Balfour's room one day gives a very good indication, I think, of the relations between the Irish Office and the Treasury during Balfour's secretaryship. Some question about administration in the West was up for consideration, and Balfour decided that the matter had been held up too long and a decision must be given at once.

"Write by to-day's post," he said to the Under-Secretary, "and say that his Excellency has given instructions that the request of the memorialists shall be granted and the work shall commence forthwith."

"Oh, you can't possibly do that," said Browning, the private secretary. "To begin with, you haven't got the Treasury sanction. This is rather a novel proposal, and you do not know what line they may take. They will probably say it creates a dangerous precedent."

"Oh, nonsense," said Balfour, "on merits they cannot possibly object; but if their sanction is necessary, wire for it. What time does the post go out?"

"Eight o'clock," said someone.

"Very well, then," said Balfour; "tell them to wire their sanction not later than four o'clock to-day."

Browning looked dubious, but the wire was dispatched, and the reply conveying their Lordships' sanction was duly received at 3 p.m.

The years which ended under Balfour's rule were years of great prosperity to the farmers and

Spaniard Castle at Boffin Island

Lighthouse at the Entrance to Valentia Harbour, Co. Kerry

to trade generally. There was a feeling of great security in the country, and the battle which raged in Parliament had not seriously disturbed the agricultural classes. So far as restoring peace and prosperity was concerned and securing protection of life and property, Balfour's task had been completed in 1889, and he gradually left the work of Irish administration to fall more and more into Ridgeway's capable hands.

Ridgeway was a firm and courageous official, and at police and military work he was in his element, but unfortunately he persuaded Balfour that papers from public departments should be submitted to him as Under-Secretary and that he should refer to Balfour only those he deemed necessary. This was not a palatable order for the Local Government Board, as it prevented them from communicating with their own chief except through the Under-Secretary, who was an ex-officio junior member of the board, and instead of the board having the advantage of Balfour's wise advice, which would have been additionally valuable to them as he had been president of the English Local Government Board, we had to go for such guidance as we required to a military officer with no experience of Poor Law and Local Government administration. Ridgeway was by no means inclined to be hypercritical, but he required a lot of coaching and précis-making and the submission of former papers before he could get a grasp of the question at issue, and this was so troublesome that in the end we hardly sent him any papers at all. When we had matters on which

a ruling of the President was imperative, we asked for a personal interview and obtained his advice verbally, with which we were quite content.

In 1890 there was a really bad season in the West, with a failure of the potato crop and a slump in the price of stock. Balfour, having completed the restoration of law and order, was anxious to let the people realize the advantages of peace and to inaugurate an ameliorative policy by the construction of light railways and the formation of the Congested Districts Board to develop the resources of the country. He was determined that the farmers should not be impoverished by a weight of debt and sacrifice of their stock just before his new measures should come into operation. He therefore started work on a very liberal scale in 1891, and as the Local Government Board were his advisers as to where and when relief work should be administered we again got into direct touch with him.

He visited all parts of Ireland with a view to the selection of his light railways, and I personally thought that he incurred a great danger at the time, not from local people, as in their hearts they were very thankful that the terrorism had ceased, but from some of the American secret societies. However, although the Parliamentary party endeavoured to get him a hostile reception in some places, notably in Donegal, they were not very successful, and he saw all the districts and people he had arranged to visit.

The winter of 1890 found me the senior in service of all the inspectors of the board except

Richard Hamilton, and as the Vice-President then resigned and George Morris succeeded him I was appointed to the vacant commissionership. Richard Hamilton was seventy years of age and just about to retire.

Balfour was very much pressed to make a light railway to Belmullet from the railway terminus at Ballina, a sorry village at the end of a trackless waste of moorland. I think he had grave misgivings as to this district being susceptible to improvement either by a railway connexion or anything else. I mentioned this to the chairman of the guardians and he was amazed. "Let me tell you," he said, "if we can get this line made, Belmullet will become the Brighton of Ballina." To my criticism that there was nothing to see worth looking at when one got there, he replied indignantly: "Our sunsets are notorious; Belmullet has the finest sunsets in the world."

There were three routes possible for this light railway—one along the north mail coast road via Ballycastle, another from the Midland at Mulranny, and the third along the direct road to Ballina. Balfour asked the people to let him know which route they would prefer, but they quarrelled so much over it that they could not decide which was best, and the railway has never been made to this day.

In the spring of 1891, Arthur Balfour became First Lord of the Treasury and Leader of the House of Commons, and was succeeded by W. L. Jackson as Chief Secretary.

CHAPTER XI

JOHN MORLEY AND LORD HOUGHTON (1891–2)

JACKSON was a good business man and was said to have done well as Financial Secretary to the Treasury, but he was not greatly suited to the Irish Secretaryship, as he was rather a solemn, matter-of-fact, unimaginative sort of person without much sense of humour. However, he had not to attempt anything new in the way of policy, but had just to hold the ship of State to the course charted for her by the late skipper, and, thanks to the wise guidance of his able Attorney-General, D. H. Madden, he did this without running on the rocks.

In 1892 the Government went out, and we had John Morley back with Lord Houghton as Viceroy. Morley at once put an end to the practice of making public departments communicate with him only through the Under-Secretary, and we once more referred our papers direct to the President. Having thus got rid of Ridgeway's interference with outside departments, Morley next got rid of Ridgeway himself, and sent him on a mission to Morocco, the necessity for which I doubt if anybody, even Ridgeway himself, ever discovered.

Sir David Harrel, the head of the Dublin Metropolitan Police, succeeded Ridgeway as Under-Secretary, and never was the position more ably

filled. Morley was a good deal pleasanter to deal with personally than he was during his previous secretaryship, but on paper he was a fiend incarnate, and used to write rasping minutes of which, in calmer moments, I think he must have been rather ashamed. I remember seeing George Morris boiling over about a minute from Morley upon an order of his authorizing rates to be collected from the occupiers, who were empowered to deduct it from the rent. Morley wrote, "The Local Government Board, if I may say so without disrespect, are antediluvian in their ideas." I pressed Morris to go and explain that we had no alternative but to make the order we did, and could have been compelled by mandamus to do so. Morris said he would not go near him; he had no right to say those things on official papers. I then asked if he had any objection if I went and had it out with him. He had none, so I saw Morley and showed him that we had no course open to us but to obey the law, and if that was to be held to be antediluvian procedure there was indeed a perplexing vista in front of us. Morley took the file from me, read his minute over, and then with a pair of scissors snipped it off.

The people, remembering Morley's readiness to grant money for relief work in 1884, eagerly looked for a return of these benefits, and he was not long in office before the usual famine shibboleths were on every tongue in the West.

"How are your people off this year?" I asked a priest in Donegal when I was introduced to him by the inspector.

"Oh, right well," he said; "the Congested Districts Board have done a lot for them down here."

The inspector was rather surprised at this admission, and asked Father M. behind his hand if he was aware that the gentleman to whom he had given so rosy an account of the people was Mr. Robinson, Commissioner of the Local Government Board. The parish priest rushed back to me saying, "I beg your pardon, sir, but I didn't quite catch what you asked me just now; but I may tell you plainly that the Dark Spectre of Famine is stalking abroad."

"What is he stalking this time, Father M.?" I asked; "is it a light railway?"

"Oh, no," he said; "sure we have that. 'Tis a deep-sea pier"!

Balfour's relief work system had been well carried out. He had engineer officers to lay out the works, and employed the police, at 4s. a day, to supervise them; so when Morley returned to power he found that all sides—shopkeepers, clergy, police, and the farmers—were joined together to persuade him that a famine was inevitable and that relief works were an urgent necessity. He was much incensed at the deliberate attempts to mislead him, and at the assumption on the part of the people that as he was supposed to be friendly to Irish aspirations he would wink at any extravagances. On one occasion the Boyle Board of Guardians told him that the people of a certain townland were dying of starvation, and at the board's suggestion he requested to be informed of the names and addresses

of the persons who were in this state. The guardians were obliged to furnish some names, and when the list came up the inspector was directed to make inquiries. The Local Government Board's report to Mr. Morley on the subject was simply a newspaper cutting giving a report of the guardians' proceedings. It was as follows:

"Clerk reported that Dr. Edgar Flinn, Local Government Inspector, had visited the guardians' list of starving people in the townland of Ballinagran. Dr. Flinn found them eating rashers and eggs, and he was not greatly taken by the distress.

"*Chairman.* 'He took an awkward time to go visit them.'"

Morley failed to see anything the least amusing in this; it only showed him that there was a strong inclination to force his hand.

The Irish members had to back up their constituents' applications, and Morley was warned that the Local Government Board were not a body who commanded the confidences of the people, and if he relied upon their reports he would be following in the footsteps of Balfour and the Tories.

All communications between the Local Government Board and the Castle on relief works went through me, as Morris left the distress administration in my hands. On the one occasion when he did discuss the subject with Morley he told me he feared he had offended him owing to a slip of the tongue. Morley had been making a large additional number

of popular magistrates, and there was great competition in the villages for these honorary appointments owing to the status they conferred. There had been rather a scandal owing to the obvious unsuitability of some of them, and it was a sore subject with him. He had sent for Morris to ask him about alleged distress in Aran. "My correspondents assure me that there are 5,000 people in want of food. What on earth can I do for them?" he asked. Morris did not take the thing seriously, knowing Aran well; and turning over in his mind the acts of Morley which had given most satisfaction he said, on the spur of the moment jocosely, and much to Morley's annoyance, "Well, maybe you might make magistrates of them."

Morley felt very keenly the attacks upon him in the Nationalist papers. He was described as an electro-plated Nationalist travelling about the country and waving a green flag, cozening with croziers and coquetting with Christianity, and these remarks, which he really ought not to have minded, made him like a bear with a sore head.

He was very badly equipped temperamentally for the Irish Secretaryship, as a joke, far from amusing him if it portrayed any characteristic features of Irish life, was regarded as very dubious if it indicated any lapse of rectitude. I remember telling him the following story which I thought was rather typical of Poor Law economy and amusing in its way, but it simply enraged him. The Ballyveeney Board of Guardians had fallen foul of the Local Government Board over the

conveyance of fever patients to hospital. They considered that a common cart filled with straw was quite good enough. The board insisted upon an ambulance, but as the guardians could not get one under £25 they absolutely refused to get one at all. At last a fever patient was jolted to death, and the board, with Morley's consent, then said that if the guardians did not obtain the ambulance they would dissolve the board and appoint paid guardians. The guardians then saw it was all up and advertised for an ambulance, the cost not to exceed £25.

The clerk of the union had a nephew who was an agent for a number of English firms, among others one of coachbuilders, and he sent to them for plans and specifications for fever ambulances. He came to his uncle in despair; the cheapest ambulance they quoted was £90 and had pneumatic tyres. Could nothing be done? "Well, send me £2," said the clerk, "and I'll see what I can do." He laid out the money in whisky, gin, porter, sandwiches, etc., and had them all spread on a little table in his office adjoining the board room. When the tenders for the ambulance came up for consideration, the clerk invited the guardians to his room and told them they might fall to without its costing them a penny. The guardians wanted no second bidding, and the clerk explained that the food and drink were sent by an English firm who were tendering for the ambulance. "Mighty big people they were, too," he said, "and this is their way of business always, when sending in tenders in England, and the queer thing is that they don't

give a goddam whether you accept their tenders or not." The guardians having finished their lunch, returned hilariously to the board room and accepted the tender for the £90 ambulance without the quiver of an eyelid.

"All were pleased," said the clerk explaining it afterwards to the inspector. "The guardians were pleased because they got their fill of good drink, my nephew was pleased because he had got his 16 per cent. commission, the makers were pleased because they had got an order from Ireland."

"Ah, yes," said the inspector; "but how about the ratepayers who had to pay £90 instead of £25?"

"The ratepayers," said the clerk, "were mighty proud because the guardians told them they were the only ratepayers in Ireland who had pneumatic tyres for their ambulance!"

The pneumatic tyres on the back wheel burst on the first day out, but the pride of the ratepayers remained unalloyed in spite of this little incident.

Lord Houghton was rather a melancholy figure as Viceroy. He had very little to say to the acts for which he was nominally responsible, and as the Home Rule policy of the Government was considered by the Unionists to be the basest desertion of the loyal population in Ireland, very few of the people of wealth and position in Ireland accepted his hospitality or attended his functions, while the lower strata of society which flocked to

the Castle were people who had nothing in common with him. His infinite boredom with the dinners and dances and the people he had to entertain he was unable to conceal in spite of his most praiseworthy efforts to do so.

However, he got his release very soon when the Prime Minister resigned after the rejection of the second Home Rule Bill by the Lords. Under the Cadogans, who succeeded him, the Dublin Castle entertainments assumed their wonted splendour once again and attracted to Dublin the land-owning aristocracy, and trade in Dublin flourished exceedingly.

CHAPTER XII

GERALD BALFOUR

GERALD BALFOUR, who became Chief Secretary, found a tower of strength at his back in John Atkinson, the brilliant and witty Attorney-General. Representing an Ulster constituency he was a straightforward Unionist and always acted in accordance with his convictions, and there was no trimming or backstairs intriguing about him, and one always knew where one stood with him. Moreover he had a knowledge of Irish life and Irish administration second to none in the country.

Thus with Gerald Balfour's ability and his attorney's wide experience and legal knowledge, the Irish Government was well equipped for getting the best out of the years that followed in the way of important domestic reforms.

Gerald Balfour was the one Chief Secretary I have known who insisted on personally directing the administration in all the departments under him. Unlike Arthur Balfour, who when asked by heads of the departments what papers he desired to have referred to him replied, " Only those which you want me to fight for you."

Gerald Balfour was a slogging worker who wished to see everything outside routine, and if he read in the Press of any action of importance

by his department before he had been apprised of it he was extremely cross. If he had kept files an unconscionable time when they were referred to him he would have delayed the work of the local body and caused a lot of trouble, and this was what many departments feared would happen; but he stuck at the work each day until he finished it, and no department was unduly held back. After a while when we knew his views it was not necessary to trouble him much, and it was sufficient to keep him in touch by weekly reports with what was going on, but even then a mass of work went through his hands with which no other Chief Secretary would have attempted to deal. Shortly before he retired I asked him if he thought it was humanly possible for a Chief Secretary really to direct and attend to the administration of all the departments under him, and at the same time get through his other work, interviews, questions in the House, and parliamentary work. He told me that in ordinary times when there was nothing special or abnormal in the way of legislation or local disturbances, a Chief Secretary ought to be well able to direct the whole administration of his department without strain, and that he himself had never found the work too heavy.

With all due deference to him, I think he was wrong so far as the average man's capabilities are in question. He himself was a very quick worker and had the most extraordinary power of switching his mind from one vexed question to another of a totally different character, but even so I have seen him utterly fagged after a hard

week's work and incapable of giving his best consideration to matters coming up at the end of the day.

I thought him a cleverer man, in a way, than his brother Arthur, though few would agree with me in this. I do not mean in diplomacy, or far-sightedness, or power of leading men; but the grasp of his mind over the most complicated problems and his power of deducing instantly the proper inferences from a confusion of chaotic and conflicting evidence were marvellous, and I have never found any other of the twenty Chief Secretaries I served under who possessed anything like his mental power in this way. Only for this exceptional gift of his I doubt if the rating and financial clauses of the Local Government Act of 1898 would ever have been passed in practical working shape. The rest of us at the round table conferences over the Bill were often utterly bewildered at problems which cropped up following the alteration of the incidence of rating, but in the thousand and one points which arose on every fresh draft of the Bill, Balfour never failed to see a way out.

He had one bad season to contend with, and relief works had again to be started on the western seaboard. It had become the practice for the Government to pay the whole cost of their works out of Parliamentary vote, and it was accordingly every ratepayer's interest in every parish to try and secure the circulation of English money. Everyone therefore combined to raise the cry of famine, and to picture the appalling consequences

which must follow if relief works were not started. To meet this difficulty the Local Government Board suggested that the guardians themselves should start the relief works, and that when they did so in localities where the board were satisfied as to their necessity the Government should contribute 75 per cent. of the cost.

Gerald Balfour adopted this plan, and it worked wonders; it put an automatic check on extravagance, as the ratepayers had no notion of being saddled with the cost of relief to persons who were not much worse off than themselves. This subtle plan led to furious anger on the part of the guardians. One of our inspectors was at a board meeting when our circular announcing a contribution of 75 per cent. was propounded. "Seventy-five per cent.," shouted the chairman indignantly, "and we fighting their battles in all parts of the world! Write and refuse, and tell them to go to hell," he said to the clerk. However, the guardians were afraid to refuse absolutely to carry on the works after the highly-coloured picture they had drawn of the state of the country, so they passed a resolution condemning the proposal that the rates should bear any part of the burden, adding the following words: "The people of this district are unanimously in favour of a large and liberal grant of pecuniary assistance from the Government which is the curse of the country"; the last seven words being an addendum put in for the purpose of showing their independence of spirit.

Gerald Balfour was fiercely attacked by Irish members over the relief administration. As he

was not very ingratiating in his manner towards them when roused, he had to be very sure of his facts, and I had constantly to go round the West to be able to advise him how things were going on, after conference with the inspectors who were in charge of the relief operations.

There was one old priest in the islands who was perpetually making the wildest allegations. He was a simple-minded old man and his curate had not the highest opinion of him, for when I asked what sort of a man his priest was, he said contemptuously, "Oh, a sod of turf, just a sod of turf." This old gentleman wrote to Balfour declaring that his parishioners "were subsisting entirely without food," and Balfour sent me the letter for inquiry.

As I was in the district I called on the P.P. and asked him how his parishioners were getting on who were living entirely without food.

"Well, it's a fact," he said; "I'm not telling ye a lie: they are really in a terrible bad way."

"But what is keeping them alive?" I asked.

"Nothing," he said, "but the memory of what yourself and Mr. Balfour are going to do for them."

"And how long will that keep them going?" I asked.

"Not one day after Christmas," he assured me.

"Send relief or coffins," was another dramatic effort on the part of a Galway priest to waken the Government to the necessity of relief works, and the effect of this portentous telegram would have alarmed the Government very much less

than it did had they seen the parish priest taking it round the town and showing it with the utmost hilarity to his friends. Among others he took it to his old friend the late member for Galway, George Morris, the Vice-President of the Local Government Board. The official utterance of the Vice-President on this occasion was, "Begorra, Father James, you are the boy who knows how to talk to them." No one really took the telegram seriously except the Irish Office, who were rather upset about it, as although they referred it to the Local Government Board for observations, the Vice-President could not very well explain that he himself on the previous day had highly commended the parish priest for the humour of it.

Gerald Balfour used to hit very hard at the members who made barefaced attempts to humbug him about the famine, and in the course of discussions made use of phrases which, though perfectly appropriate and good common sense, had better been left unsaid. Some very bitter complaints had been made about distress in one district where the people had an abundance of potatoes and sufficient employment on relief works. The inspector found them grumbling and dissatisfied. "Potatoes are no food for men," they said, "and these Scotch potatoes are giving the people wind."

The Irish members were taking up in the House the point of the sameness of the diet, and rather riled Balfour, who said he was keeping destitute people out of the workhouse at the public

expense, and that was all he could be expected to do. No doubt if he could give them chickens and champagne and send them to the South of France it would be a more desirable treatment, but it was unlikely that the Treasury would agree. This roused the Irish members in the House, and the phrase " Chicken and Champagne " was used against him on every possible occasion as an example of his callousness.

Another unfortunate phrase was that of " killing Home Rule by kindness." He never said that he had hoped to do so; on the contrary, what he said was that he did not conceive it would be possible to kill Home Rule by kindness, but he hoped to do all he could to ameliorate the lot of the people.

This phrase caught on and was used against him in the unfairest manner. To give an illustration, our inspector visiting relief works found a well-known female political agitator getting small children, bent double under enormous burdens of turf and rocks and stones piled on their little backs, for the brief period necessary to enable a snapshot to be taken, and this picture she sent to the English and American papers under the heading of " ' Killing Home Rule by Kindness ' ! Mr. G. Balfour's Relief Works " !

This lady was the daughter of a gallant old soldier, but for some reason she delighted in blackening the British army.

I was at Belmullet one day and heard her making an oration on the coming downfall of England. The Irish soldiers alone were brave

men, she said; "the Scottish soldiers had a few brave men in their ranks, but the English soldiers invariably turned and ran whenever they faced the foe. England is done," she continued, "she cannot defend her colonies. Russia will take India, France will take Australia, Germany will take Africa, America will take Canada"—but here there was an anti-climax. The doctor, who had just come in wet and dripping from the Inniskea Islands, six miles off the coast, where he had been detained all night, was listening to her, and he shouted out, "Look here, mam, I wish to God you could get Switzerland to take Inniskea. Couldn't ye manage that, now, for us?"

The audience were so delighted with the doctor's amendment to her plan that they would hardly listen to the rest of her harangue.

The inspector of the district was responsible for playing a trick on this lady. When it was known that she was visiting one district, the Catholic curate, who was a very ardent young Nationalist, had spent a lot of money, far more than he could afford, in getting up a reception for her: he gave dinners—great spreads with turbot, lobsters, choice wines and fruits—to which all the prominent clergy and leading merchants were asked; and she was made so much of that it turned her head. She went off by the north coast road thinking herself a person of extreme importance. The board's inspector met her at Ballycastle and confided to her that he strongly believed that the relieving officer was robbing the people by not paying relief, and he gave her

a number of suspected cases. He explained that they could not have an inquiry because no one had pluck enough to come forward and give evidence, but if a fine, courageous woman like herself would take it up, and would not be afraid to investigate the case and give evidence, the relieving officer would be got rid of at once. She rose to the bait and went off to interview the people. Eventually an inquiry was held, and she came forward with all the evidence she had procured, and it was quite sufficient to enable the man to be dismissed. It was only after the dismissal that she learnt that the erring relieving officer was the twin brother of her host who had recently entertained her so lavishly. Meeting the priest some time afterwards the inspector asked him slyly, "By the way, Father L——, have you heard anything of Miss ——, the lady you spent all the money on?" The curate's observations regarding the character of the lady, mentally, morally and physically, would not bear repetition.

CHAPTER XIII

CONCERNING ORGANISMS AND BANDS

I USED to take great pleasure in attending the western guardians' meetings; they were such friendly, delightful, simple people. They knew little or nothing of what was going on in the outside world. Few of them could read the newspapers, and had no interest outside their own locality.

One discussion on sanitary matters I well remember, but it was such a widely circulated joke in the district at the time that I hesitate to include this old chestnut in these reminiscences; but as I was present when it occurred, and some of the humorous features of the situation may have escaped notice, I may as well recount it.

There had been a terrible outbreak of typhoid, and although the new water supply was known to be pure, certain indications tended to the assumption that it was the origin of the disease, so the medical officer of health determined to have a further analysis, and samples were sent up to Dr. Cameron. At a meeting at which I was present, a clerk read the analyst's reply to the effect that the water was much contaminated and that the abundance of living organisms was remarkable. The clerk having read this was called away for a minute and the chairman opened the dis-

cussion upon the letter. He had not gone far before I perceived that not one of the board had the faintest idea what an organism was.

"Now, gentlemen, what will yez do? There's an organism in the wather. What the blazes is it doing there I dunno, and is it there yet, I wondher? I seen no signs of it and me passing the reservoy last night, but I'm afeard it's there yet—divil a doubt of it. Young Ryan got the fever from it last night I heard tell."

"Have it taken ower that," said one guardian, who by reason of the doctor lodging with him was regarded as the public health expert of the board.

"Ay, but who'll do it?" said the chairman. "If any fella interfaired with it, sure it might lep out at him and give him the divil's own dose of fever, so it might."

"It's the sanitary officer's duty," said the expert. "He's in charge of the reservoy, and if them things goes trespassing he has a right to put them out."

And thus it was solved. The minutes read as follows—"Read a letter from Dr. Cameron saying water was unhealthy owing to living organism in the water. Order:—The sub-sanitary officer to have it removed."

The sequel appeared a week later at the next meeting of the board. The clerk read out: "Letter from Mr. McAndrew, sub-sanitary officer, enclosing bill for 12s. 6d., being remuneration and expenses in removing the organism from the reservoir."

I could see that the chairman and guardians were bursting with curiosity to know what it was,

but being illiterate they never liked to display ignorance on any subject before me, so they proceeded to criticize the S.-S. officer's application as if living organisms and their nature and care were very thoroughly understood by them.

"'Tis too much he's charging altogether," said an economist; "seven and six is as much as should be paid for putting out any organism."

"Offer him five shillings," suggested another.

"Have the S.-S.O. up," I proposed, "and get him to explain."

So Mr. McAndrew was brought before the board and the chairman flew at him like a wild cat. "What divil's roguery is this, charging twelve and six for putting out wan organism? Sure ye ought to be able to turn out half a dozen of them for that!"

"Well, now," said the S.-S.O., "it's nothing I want out of it. I had to get two men with ropes and we had to go up to our waists in the wather, and were hard set to get it out afther."

By this time the guardians were wild to know what it was, so I rushed into the breach. "Mr. Chairman, I am a stranger here and as I am not familiar with the organisms of the place would you kindly ask the S.-S.O. to describe it—to tell us what it was like?"

"Tell the inspector now, Mr. McAndrew; he's a stranger here."

"It was a dead ass," said McAndrew.

When Gerald Balfour visited Belmullet he was strongly urged to make the line which his brother had been willing to construct if the route

had been agreed upon, and the advocates for the line crowded around him when he was leaving and implored him not to forget Belmullet, to which he replied that he was not likely to forget it. They were thinking of the railway, but he referred no doubt to the impression made on him by a contemplation of the poverty and bleak, cheerless surroundings; but his promise was taken by the people to mean that he would give them the railway forthwith, and the fact that he did not do so stamped him as an impostor in their eyes.

There was a good deal of intimidation in Balfour's time in connexion with the taking of farms by individuals which the people wished the Congested Districts Board to acquire and partition among the people, but the Attorney-General never let the country get out of hand, and the intimidation was not very serious. One case was referred to me for inquiry in which it was alleged that a Mr. McGing, who had purchased a farm, was subject to the cruellest intimidation which made life not worth living. I went to call on him, and was lucky enough to find on my arrival the intimidation in full swing, so I was able to judge the effect. There were a lot of people there, mostly young women and boys, headed by the brass band, all encamped on McGing's lawn; the band was playing the "Dead March," which I was told the curate had brought with him from Dublin. It was considered to be a piece which lent itself to awe-inspiring effects, as the air itself died down from time to time to give solemnity to a resounding bang on the big drum.

The artist who worked the drum was so carried

away by the enormous importance of his contribution towards the intimidation, that he used to stand with the drumstick uplifted, like Ajax defying the lightning, waiting for the pause when he was to come in with his bang, and at the appropriate moment he used to leap up into the air and catch the drum such a tremendous thump that he nearly always lost his balance, much to the delight of the crowd and of the girls in particular, who with linked arms were laughing themselves into hysterics over his efforts. "Oh, for God's sake will yez look at Timmy Doyle on the big drum," they cried; and any new arrivals were greeted with cries of "Hurry up now till yez see Timmy Doyle at the big drum!" Timmy uplifted by the attention he was attracting, nearly went off his head, and at the end used to back about ten yards away to wait for the pause, and at the wave of the conductor's baton he would charge up to the drum, leap at it with a wild yell, and fetch it a most tremendous whack, amid wild cries from the crowd, "Good for you, Timmy," "Timmy's the boy," "Knock hell out of it, Tim."

At last, when Timmy was beginning to rile the conductor and some of the other performers who wanted to have their share of the limelight, the door of the house opened and McGing came out and stood on the doorstep. He was a florid, rather jolly looking man, and stood there watching the crowd and the band with his hands in his pocket and smoking a briar pipe. He took his pipe out of his mouth once to laugh at Timmy, who in one of his rushes knocked the drum up

against the cornet player, who promptly hit him a smack on the jaw. Then when the tune was finished McGing said, "What sort of a tune, in the name of God, do you call that?"

"'Tis the 'Dead March,'" said the conductor, rolling his eyes horribly.

"The 'Dead March' is it?" said McGing; "throth then it had a right to be buried as well as dead, the devil such a tune ever I heard. Well, if any of you have a mouth on you, come inside; there's a barrel of porther in the kitchen handy."

"We wouldn't drink with the likes of you," said the conductor.

"Well," said McGing, going back into the house, "there it is now, let you please yourselves."

"Well, I dunno," said Timmy, "but I think I have a right to be let off them rules again drinkin' with him; sure I have done harder work than any of yez." With that he threw down his drumstick with the remark, "To the devil I pitch you," and stalked into the house, followed by others as soon as they could think of reasons why they should be regarded also as exceptions to the conductor's decision. In five minutes there wasn't a man, including the conductor, who was not in the kitchen drinking with McGing.

I went away then, and the police constable, who had been on the edge of the crowd, told me in the evening what the finale was.

"Ye should have been there," he said, "when the band came out—ye couldn't but laff; McGing sitting there on the window-ledge smoking his pipe, with the band in front of him, calling the

tunes and marking time with his fists. 'Give us "Patrick's Day" now, boys'; 'Now give us "The Wearing of the Green,"' and him clapping his hands and leading the applause. And after them playing all the tunes they had, and he had all the wind knocked out of them, he took them in for another drink, and walks down to the gate with them and says, 'Well, God bless the work, boys. Any time you're passing this way will yez gimme a call? I want to have another look at Timmy Doyle on the "Dead March."'"

It always rather surprised me to see how easy it seemed for even very poor places to run a local band. The drums and fifes were merely a matter of one or two collectors making a house-to-house levy, but some quite small places had a goodly number of brass and wood wind instruments. All the performers took a tremendous pride in their performances and fancied themselves musicians of the very highest order. My colleague in the Local Government Board, Richard Bagwell, told me there was a loon of a herd at his place who banged the cymbals at the nod of the conductor of the local band, and who was convinced that he was the greatest authority on music since Beethoven. One Saturday Bagwell was passing the ancient concert rooms when the people were all trooping out from an oratorio, and to his surprise he saw among them the cymbal artist aforesaid, and on asking him what on earth he was doing there, he replied: "Ah, well, I thought it was as good for me to come up to Dublin and get a wrinkle on the 'Cujus.'"

CHAPTER XIV

LOCAL GOVERNMENT REFORM (1898)

GERALD BALFOUR'S complete mastery of the details of every subject he took in hand made him most successful in legislative work in the House of Commons, and he had so got into the swing of domestic legislation in 1897 that the Local Government Board thought it an opportune time to get their long-hoped-for Poor Law reform carried. Balfour fully approved of its purpose, and the Bill was introduced early in 1897. It removed statutory obstacles to amalgamation of unions and classification of workhouses, and made provision for better treatment of children, infirm people, and all classes of sick.

It would have proved a most useful measure, and as it was not highly contentious it passed through all the earlier stages in the House without much difficulty. After that I heard no more about it, but was very busy all the spring at the preliminary work which would have been necessary to carry it into operation. I was therefore much hurt and disappointed at reading in the paper that the Bill had been dropped, especially as Balfour had not told me a word about it. I thought I would sooth my feelings with a holiday, and accordingly embarked in my yacht for a long cruise on the west coast of Scotland. I arrived at Rothesay

in time for a race for which I was entered. We were becalmed all night, and when I got back next morning there was a letter marked "Immediate" from Gerald Balfour explaining what had happened about my Poor Law Bill.

It appears that the Cabinet decided that, instead of a little measure of this kind, the time was ripe to try the experiment of a complete and comprehensive scheme of local government replacing grand juries and the Poor Law boards with their ex-officio members by popular bodies elected on a parliamentary franchise. He explained that he had not been at liberty to disclose this Cabinet secret, and expressed regret at all the sterile work upon which I had been engaged, but hoped it might come in useful later.

Mr. Balfour enclosed a copy of the English Local Government Act, and he instructed me at once to prepare for him a statement giving my idea of how the English measure could be applied to Ireland; how far the principles might be accepted, and what modifications, if any, were necessary.

So the *Almida* dropped her anchor in Rothesay Bay, and I sat at the work all day and well into the night, inwardly anathematizing the tourist steamers which kept passing and repassing and raising a perpetual swell which nearly rolled us gunwale under. I finished the statement and got it off in the morning, and it was before the Government in a few days. Not very long afterwards Gerald Balfour sent me on a few sheets of closely written foolscap—his first draft of the Local Govern-

ment Bill of 1898. This document I carefully preserved, but I grieve to say it was burned in a dispatch box with other papers when the Custom House was destroyed by the Sinn Feiners. It is the one possession I lost there which I most deeply regret.

After the summer holidays the stupendous work of the preparation of the Bill began. It was a complete revolution, wiping out the ex-officio and nominated element on all public bodies and substituting county and district councils elected on a parlimentary franchise. It altered the incidence of rating and the system of assessment and collection.

Even with the 120 clauses in the Act, it was found impossible to make provision for one-half of the alterations that had to be made, and a short cut was found by giving power to the Lord-Lieutenant to make Orders in Council applying the provisions of the English Act to Ireland and adapting all the appropriate parts of the Grand Jury Laws and the surviving Irish enactments. Thus, by means of this one clause, authorizing legislation by Order in Council, discussion was averted over practically the whole of the working machinery of the Act. If the application of the enactments had formed part of the Bill, there never would have been time to get it through the House in a single session.

There were many complaints of this method of burking discussion on the working clauses of the Bill. It was said that the Bill was like the dial and empty case of a watch, and that the

operative clauses were all embodied in the Orders in Council like the works of the watch. However, the Irish members wanted the Bill, and never carried their protests to lengths which jeopardized its passage through the House. Mr. T. M. Healy voiced their feelings about it when he said that this Bill, after years of disappointments and hopes deferred, was like the shadow of a great rock in a weary desert, and that it brought a brighter light to the eyes of "Dark Rosaleen."

Gerald Balfour had piloted the Bill through the House with consummate skill, and his knowledge of the object of every line of it was so clear that he was unassailable in committee. It was therefore a terrible disappointment to him that, just when the work was finished, he broke down under the strain, and the final stages had to be taken by John Atkinson, the Attorney-General.

Just before the Bill became law, the Vice-President of the Board, George Morris, retired under the age clause, and on his successor devolved the task of breaking up the old system of local government and inaugurating the new. It was considered to be such a very hazardous job that there were no applicants for the post of Vice-President, and I was promoted to it without opposition from anyone. I had worked so hard at the Bill and had all the strings in my hand so firmly, that I would probably have held my own against any other candidates. All the same, the fact that no one wanted the post might have been somewhat perturbing had it not been that

for six months I had been giving most earnest thought to everything before me and saw my way quite plain. The Act had to come into operation in April, 1899, and the interval between this and the passing of the Act was a nightmare, as there was so much to be thought of and so much to be done. There was no precedent for any of the difficulties which arose day after day. Every problem was new and the work was so overwhelming that at one time it was not possible to attempt to answer the letters by post, and the replies to correspondence had to be dictated on to telegraph forms and sent off as soon as received.

The secretary of the board, after a week of the work, had a nervous breakdown and disappeared for good from official life. Several of the clerks were similarly affected, but with these exceptions, the work of the staff was beyond all praise. The preparation of the elections for the 600 new bodies was a most anxious and critical time, and the day after they were held, when the wires came in from district after district saying that everything had gone off without a hitch, and the whole of our new governing bodies were all legally constituted, the relief was indescribable.

One occurrence at the first elections is worth recording. It was at Tuam election, and one of the candidates nominated for the county councillorship died a couple of days before and his funeral took place on the morning of the election. The dead man's name remained on the ballot papers as there hadn't been time to prepare new ones. The voters, who had just come from the

Lismore Castle

Cabins in Derryvoreda

funeral to the polling booths, were much surprised to read that the deceased was still a candidate. One man said, "Well, it would be a compliment to his wife to elect him," but while the voters were hesitating about this, another one shouted out, "Well, anyway he won't raise the rates on us," and the sterling wisdom of this so impressed the rest of them that they voted for him, and he was returned as county councillor by a large majority. Then a difficulty arose at the first meeting. The deceased having been returned as a county councillor could not send in his resignation, so no one could be elected in his place. The chairman studied the Act and triumphantly pointed out that they had only to wait for six months and if the deceased did not take his seat during that time his place could be declared vacant and a new councillor could be co-opted. The remains failed to appear at any meeting during the six months and the difficulty was thereby solved.

In the very remote parts of Mayo and Galway the small farmers were all on the same dead level of poverty, and it was therefore difficult to find local candidates for county councillorships who could pay the expense of journeying to and from the county town to attend meetings of the council. In such cases the people were represented by local shopkeepers from a distance who knew little about them. In other instances local candidates could not be persuaded to come forward because they were ashamed to appear before the councils in their ragged attire. I heard of one poor division

where a locally elected poverty-stricken farmer overcame this difficulty rather cleverly.

Addressing his constituents after the election and declaring his determination to be worthy of them, he pointed out that his good intentions were rather liable to be frustrated by the state of his trousers. Raising the skirt of his coat and turning slowly round he pointed out the weaknesses of his nether garments, especially the patch on the seat, which was rapidly breaking away from its moorings.

How could he be expected faithfully to represent the division of Mullaghbawn while his trousers were letting in the wind and rain on all sides?

With that he stepped down from the platform, and while thanking them for their cheers, he went round cap in hand and exhorted them to behave handsomely in the matter of subscribing to a pair of trousers which would "shed a lustre," as he put it, "on the character of the council's proceedings." If his constituents wouldn't do that it was only a mockery to be electing him, and they and their cheers and the county council might all go to blazes. However, they escaped this fate, and their representative attended the first meeting in a pair of trousers which, as he said, "bet out the divil for pattern and strength."

The new bodies had most important matters to attend to at their first meetings; we sent to every individual county and district councillor a printed statement setting out everything they had to do, and every resolution they had to pass at their first meeting. We pointed out that all

these steps were essential preliminaries, and that it was necessary for the success of the Act that none of them should be omitted. We were on tenterhooks until we heard how these first meetings went off, but once again the wires kept coming in, all telling the same story of the work having been completed in accordance with the circular. When it was all over, and we were able to see the successful fruition of our hard nine months' work, I went home to bed and did not get up for two days.

In 1900, in recognition of my work in bringing the Local Government Act into operation, I was promoted in the Order of the Bath to Knight Commander, but, curiously enough, I received no intimation of it whatever until I saw it in the *Gazette*, where it appeared with the other Birthday Honours.

It may perhaps be remarked that in my story of the problems and difficulties which beset the Local Government Board as the central authority for supervising the administration of local bodies, no word has been written of Ulster. The truth is that there never were any difficulties in Ulster arising from the hostility of local bodies to the central authority. Ulster prided itself upon its loyal support of the British Government, and recognized the status and powers of the public departments responsible to Parliament, and submitted to their rulings as a matter of course. The Local Government Board's administration in Ulster in these circumstances was straightforward and uneventful.

In the rest of Ireland, on the other hand, opposition to the Irish Government and the executive in and out of Parliament was the first principle of political life, and the determination to obstruct and make the government troublesome could in a great measure be effected by constant resistance to the Local Government Board. The board had therefore pitfalls to avoid in the South which were quite unknown in the North, and as their decisions in the South were daily the subject of numerous questions in the House of Commons, they had to be constantly on the *qui vive*, whereas their administration in the North was rarely, if ever, challenged.

Moreover, the chief characteristic of northern administration was rigid economy. The members of the local bodies were mostly business people with the Scottish instinct to get value for their money strongly developed, and they kept the rates down and seldom fell foul of the auditor; while the southerners were characterized by a greater open-handedness and a more high-spirited contempt for the restrictions of English Acts of Parliament, and had to be more closely shepherded.

It will thus be understood that in the story of the vicissitudes of local government in Ireland Ulster plays a small but honourable part.

To assist us in carrying the new Act into operation, the Government decided to add to the Local Government Board a representative of the old grand juries, and Richard Bagwell, foreman of Tipperary Grand Jury, was selected. We counted

ourselves fortunate to have his services, he was so witty and well informed and so sound in his judgment. The only difficulty I had was over his superlative honesty and candour in expressing his sentiments. He had come to the Civil Service too late in life to realize the value of official reticence, and he said exactly what he thought at public meetings and deputations, which sometimes was extremely embarrassing.

I never shall forget my horror at the first deputation he assisted the board to receive. The members had come to talk over the steps necessary for carrying the Act into operation, and were very courteous and grateful for the advice we were able to give them. Just as they were about to leave, Bagwell asked them who it was believed would be elected chairman of the new council. The leader of the deputation said it was not quite certain, but he would not be surprised if it were Mr. O'Riordan. "Ha, ha, ha!" laughed Bagwell, "that's very good—the biggest blackguard in Ireland!" The deputation looked very uncomfortable, though not more so than I felt, and their leader said hastily, "Of course, that's only a rumour. It's very likely that Colonel Gunn will be elected." "Ha, ha, ha!" roared Bagwell; "better still—the biggest fool in Ireland." Fortunately the Press were not present, and I persuaded Bagwell that his frankness, while a new and refreshing experience, might get the board disliked, and thereafter the absurdities of deputations were greeted by him with loud laughter only, without spoken comment.

Bagwell was a most good-tempered, kindly man, but he had rather a gruff, rasping manner and speech, and he told us one story at the board which made it hard for us to keep our countenances.

We were speaking of William O'Brien.

"A desperate ruffian," said Bagwell. "I had to see him when he was in Clonmel Gaol, when he wouldn't put on the prison clothes and remained all day in his shirt. I was visiting justice. Said afterwards I addressed him in a brutal and overbearing manner."

"But you didn't, did you?" I asked.

"Of course I didn't," he shouted. "I asked the chief warder, who was with me, if I had addressed him in a brutal and overbearing manner, and he said he saw no difference whatever in my manner. So that disposed of Mr. O'Brien's complaint."

Another measure of first importance, which Gerald Balfour was responsible for carrying through Parliament, was the Agricultural and Technical Instruction Act, which was the offspring of Horace Plunkett's Recess Committee. Plunkett took up this matter of the improvement of agricultural and technical instruction with an energy which swept everything before it, and in its passage through the House he knew every detail of the Bill so well that Balfour had none of the difficulties to deal with that he had over the intricacies of the Local Government Act. But, unfortunately, this measure proved the end of Horace Plunkett's parliamentary career. Having carried it triumphantly through the House, he proceeded to

appoint his staff, and so convinced was he that the success or failure of his Act depended upon the chief offices being held by the very best men that could be secured, irrespective of religion or nationality, that, in pursuit of his quest, he went to the four corners of the three Kingdoms. As some dissentients put it, "nothing would satisfy him only to be making out that the Scotch were the divil an' all" by selecting so many of their specialists on agricultural and technical instruction for his new department, and shutting his eyes to the financial necessities of deserving young Irishmen who had rendered splendid services to the Home Rule cause. This made him unpopular with the National party, and the appointment of T. P. Gill to the secretaryship wrecked him with the Unionists.

Gill had been on the Recess Committee and had worked at all the details of the measure with Plunkett, and he knew Plunkett's policy and aims; so Plunkett deemed his appointment as secretary to the department to be necessary for launching the measure and for its ultimate success. But Gill, when a member of Parliament, had been concerned with the never-to-be-forgotten Plan of Campaign, which had ruined so many people in Ireland, and the selection of him as head of the board by a Conservative Chief Secretary and Conservative Chief Minister, was not only injurious to Gerald Balfour's prestige, but it so infuriated Plunkett's constituents in South Dublin that it sealed his fate, and, at the next General Election, his chance of representing South Dublin disappeared

and he was replaced by Bryan Cooper. Still Plunkett slogged away with his Act, and he has certainly carved his name in adamant in connexion with agricultural and technical instruction, for his measure has been a wonderful success, and whatever Gill's past sins may have been before he took office under the Crown, in his capacity of permanent head of the board he has done real good work.

CHAPTER XV

GERALD BALFOUR AND LORD CADOGAN; GEORGE WYNDHAM AND SIR ANTHONY MACDONNELL

IN 1900 Gerald Balfour was appointed to the Presidency of the Board of Trade with a seat in the Cabinet. He had not been previously in the Cabinet, and Irish interests were in the hands of Lord Cadogan. The arrangement of a Lord-Lieutenant in the Cabinet with the Chief Secretary outside worked very well in Lord Spencer's time, when the Lord-Lieutenant was a strong, experienced statesman and the Chief Secretary was a 'prentice hand willing to leave him all the responsibility and play up to him in every point of policy. It was a different thing, however, when, as in the Balfour-Cadogan regime, Balfour was the brains carrier, and Cadogan, the titular Governor-General, was a statesman possibly owing more to his wealth and influence than to his experience.

There was not exactly friction between them, but Cadogan thought he was not being consulted sufficiently or kept *au fait* as to the progress of the Local Government Act, and this he much resented. Balfour really had not time to explain the progress of the Bill to the Viceroy, who insisted on knowing the why and wherefore of everything, so I was deputed to do so, and saw him regularly for the purpose. He puzzled me immensely. The

most childishly simple and elementary things it was often almost impossible to get him to understand, but his brain had curious patches of brilliancy, and complicated, difficult matters, which I would be in despair at the very idea of having to force into his head, he would often take in at once, and sometimes make most useful suggestions concerning them. One Cabinet Minister summed him up admirably in the following words : " The curious thing about Cadogan is that you never can tell what he won't understand." He was a most courteous and charming person to get on with, and it was always a real pleasure to be of service to him.

George Wyndham succeeded Balfour, and a more picturesque and spectacular Chief Secretary we never had. He very soon ousted Cadogan from his seat in the Cabinet and occupied it himself, with Lord Dudley as his Viceroy. Wyndham was a tempestuous sort of genius, in the sense that he was flashing about the Irish atmosphere like summer lightning, with inspirations and brilliant ideas about current problems which fairly took one's breath away. His perpetual desire was for something original and striking, and this kept him at high pressure. To hear him after dinner holding forth to a bewildered company on new ways of looking at every aspect of the Irish question gave one a despairing idea of ever being able to live up to him and carry his schemes into practical effect. He used to frighten me sometimes, when I went to see him about very ordinary matters of Local Government policy, by speaking long and earnestly,

but at the same time so incomprehensively that I thought I had got a migraine, to which I have always been rather subject, as I had been quite unable to take in what he said. His private secretary reassured me: "Oh, don't be alarmed; you're all right—that's just a way of his. We don't take any notice of it; he is probably rehearsing a bit of some speech or other."

A curious example of this came to my notice some years afterwards. I was speaking to a priest about the chances of the Belmullet Railway, when he told me this remarkable story—I give it in his own words as well as I remember them:

"Ah, well, we'll never get the line; it's only humbugging us they all are. First of all came Arthur Balfour, and I amn't blaming him, for he would have given us the railway if we had been able to make up our minds which route it ought to run. Then we had Gerald Balfour, who was going to do the divil an' all for the country, and he towld the deputation that he'd 'never forget Belmullet.' Those were his words, but much good his memory of Belmullet did us afther.

"Ould Bryce came down an' says he, 'I'll get yez the railway.' He said it plain an' clear, ay, an' he wrote it in those words to the Montsignor, an' he has the letter with him within in the presbytery. But it came out that what he meant was that he'd get us the railway if the Treasury had no objection, an' whin they objected, all he done was to say, 'Begob, I'm bet.' Wyndham, is it? Well, that was the curiousest thing of all. He came down here an' just as he was drivin' away on his

carriage the deputation from the railway came up an' he heard every word they spoke, an' he stood up in the carriage for to address them. Oh, a grand, lovely man he was, with the black hair swep' off his forehead an' his tall figure an' his broad shoulders, with the little slim waist on him an' the glory of the face he had, an' all the girls were claspin' their hands an' cryin' out for the love of him, so they were. When he started out for to reply to the deputation, divil a finer speech ivir come from the lips of man. The clear, ringin' voice, an' the rise an' fall of it, an' every time he paused you couldn't but cheer. An' whin the last words died out—and mind ye it was a long speech—he sat down, bowed to the people, an' the carriage druv off an' the cheers of the people could be heard long afther he got out of sight.

"Well, then there was a terrible argument as to what he said. Some of us said he'd given us the railway, an' more of us said he had not. An' then there was such disputin' an' arguin' over it that it ended in a fight, an' the police had to come up an' drive the people off. An' now comes the quare thing. I was over in Edinburgh shortly afther, stopping with a young cousin of mine, a Catholic curate there, an' I seen a notice as how there was to be an election for the Lord Rectorship of the University. It was a terrible big meetin' an' I made for to go inside, but I wouldn't be let, without a ticket, so I said I was only a poor priest from the West, but I knew Mr. Wyndham and I hoped they'd let me in. There was a fella passin' with some sort of a badge, and if he didn't bring me right in an' right up to

the platform, an' I was as near to Wyndham as I am to yourself. Then he made his speech, an' it swep' the people off their feet with the grandeur of it, but may the divil fly away with me if I'm tellin' ye a lie, 'twas from beginning to end the speech he gave the deputation in reply to their address axin' for the Belmullet Railway!"

Wyndham had so quick a brain that he lost all patience with slow thinkers or slow speakers. Sir David Harrel, who was one of the wisest men of our time, was a very deliberate speaker who always thought before he spoke, and never used two words when one would do. While he was speaking one noticed often that Wyndham could scarcely conceal his impatience; and Harrel, who was not the kind of man who would stand being rushed, very soon resigned. As I was then senior head of a department in Ireland and had made good over the Local Government Act, I was first favourite for the Under-Secretaryship, but although I knew that some influential people were urging my appointment, I knew Wyndham sufficiently to be sure that he would do nothing so prosaic as to appoint as Under-Secretary a man who everyone guessed would be appointed, and it was accordingly no disappointment to me when I received this letter:

28th October, '02.

My dear Sir Henry,

You will see to-morrow an announcement that Sir Anthony MacDonnell has been appointed to succeed Sir David Harrel. The post is one to which you, in virtue of your great service to local government, might have aspired, but you cannot, in my judgment, be spared

from your present task, and youth is on your side. I should like to remind you of our conversation on the night of our last dinner at the Chief Secretary's Lodge. I have made some progress with the Treasury on the lines we then discussed, but in view of the many parliamentary interruptions to which I am subjected, I need the assistance of some one person in Dublin as my Chief of Staff to assist me in correlating the financial aspects of the different departments of Irish Government. I shall be much obliged if you will give Sir Anthony MacDonnell all the necessary facilities for acquainting himself with the working of your department, and more especially of its financial working in respect of (*a*) Rating in Ireland, (*b*) Exchequer contributions from the Treasury.

I am making a similar request to the chiefs of the other departments. I am much obliged for the information you have given me on the points I have submitted to you, and I hope in the course of the next few days to elicit a definite reply from the Treasury.

Yours very sincerely,

GEORGE WYNDHAM.

P.S.—Let me tell you that I have asked the Lord-Lieutenant to submit your name for a Privy Councillorship.

I did not want the Under-Secretaryship, as I considered that my own position was more independent, and in many other ways preferable, but I sometimes think that things might have been easier for Wyndham if he had appointed me. He would have been spared a good deal of vexation, and the crisis would never have come with the Devolution Scheme which led to his undoing. Anthony MacDonnell was a very big gun in India, and, in accepting a minor Civil Service

post like the Irish Under-Secretaryship he might well be pardoned if he did so under the belief that he was practically to be, if not the director of Irish government, at all events to have a great deal to say in shaping its policy, and that Parliament and the Chief Secretary would give effect by orders and legislation to reforms which, by the light of his long experience, he thought necessary; and this led to friction between him and Wyndham from the start.

MacDonnell would come out with some ideas based upon his Indian experiences which Wyndham would deem to be quite impossible for Ireland, either from a party or a practical point of view; and as no arguments would shake MacDonnell, Wyndham would have at last to declare definitely that he would not have them, and MacDonnell would go off in high dudgeon.

Next day MacDonnell would come back with an alternative suggestion which, when closely examined, would turn out to be almost the same as the original one, only phrased in a different way. There would be the same tussle and argument over this, and Wyndham's final rejection, and next day it would come again with other amendments. This sort of thing really worried Wyndham to death, and used to make him quite sulky and morose at times.

CHAPTER XVI

SIR ANTHONY MACDONNELL; LORD DUDLEY

WYNDHAM'S own mind was bubbling over with new and brilliant conceptions, some of which would have been possible and some impossible of achievement, and what he really needed was an Under-Secretary who would accept his ideas and work them out in detail and let him see for himself whether, for practical purposes, they would be a success.

But MacDonnell was far too honest to waste time over any suggestions he personally believed to be unsound, and he would criticize with perfect frankness any of Wyndham's ideas he did not like, no matter how attractive and ingenious they might appear on the surface.

MacDonnell was convinced that he ought to have more control of public departments than that provided by statute, and in view of the great and growing importance of the Local Government Board's functions, he evidently considered that the position of *ex officio* member of the board, which he held by virtue of his office of Under-Secretary, did not give him all the control he desired. He therefore persuaded Wyndham to give directions which would have shut off the permanent heads of departments from direct communication with their official

chief. The order was communicated to me in the following terms :

My dear Sir Henry,

In pursuance of conversation which I have had with you on one or two occasions I propose to send you a formal minute describing that papers of a certain description shall be sent to me through my office.

I have been under-staffed for more than a year and not in a position to deal adequately and at a sufficiently early moment with all the matters that call for my attention, or for defence in Parliament, from the Estate Commissioner, the C.D.B., your department, the new department, and latterly also, the Board of Works. The difficulty is increased by the amount of general work which devolves in these days on a Cabinet Minister.

The Treasury have given me a slight addition to my staff from which I hope to derive some ease from a burden that was becoming intolerable.

Yours very sincerely,
George Wyndham.

I had experience of the trouble and inconvenience of an arrangement of this kind in Ridgeway's time, and as our papers had increased tenfold since then I could not have carried on the business at all if hampered in this way. Therefore, I went at once to Wyndham on receipt of this letter and assured him that if he left the Local Government work to the Local Government Board we should be able to save him trouble and annoyance, as we had done heretofore, and that if MacDonnell would attend our meetings in his capacity of *ex officio* member of the board he could keep in touch

with what was going on, and we should be very glad to have the benefit of his opinion in our discussions. But if, instead of attending our meetings, we had to submit all our papers to him and let him discuss them with the President of the Board while I, as Vice-President, was debarred from doing so, I should have to send a vanload of papers every day to the Castle, as I could not take the responsibility of acting for the President if I was not to be allowed to have any direct communication with him. Wyndham practically admitted that the circular was issued under strong pressure from MacDonnell, and assured me I was at liberty to use my own discretion in acting upon it, and, following the dictates of experience, I took no more notice of it.

MacDonnell resented our action in ignoring the circular. I think Lord Dudley took his part, as about this time he began to call upon us for explanations of charges levelled against us in the newspapers. One day there appeared in the Press a long speech by William Field, saying that the Local Government Board were blundering jackasses and alleging that we had done something he considered quite wrong, but which as a matter of fact we had never done at all. William Field was one of the very best and a great friend of mine, but as for his attacks, well, he was like Ben Gunn in "Treasure Island"—"dead or alive, nobody minds Ben Gunn."

This newspaper report was cut out and sent us by MacDonnell with a minute to the effect that his Excellency desired to be furnished with a full and immediate explanation.

King Edward's arrival in Dublin

King Edward's visit to Connemara: The start from Leenane

To this we wrote that it was rather characteristic of Mr. Field's wild speeches, but we never took any notice of this kind of abuse from M.Ps.

Then came back a sharp reply calling attention to his Excellency's request and demanding an explanation of Mr. Field's allegations. I pointed out that the Chief Secretary was President of the board, and in so important a matter as the board's action being challenged I must refer the correspondence to him for instructions.

I then sent over the file with masses of papers to the President, who was very busy at the time and held it up for more important matters for about a month, when he was just off for his holidays. He glanced over it, but not being able to make out what it was all about, he marked it "read and noted." This we forwarded to the Under-Secretary "for his information." After this we had no more trouble.

We should have welcomed MacDonnell's co-operation and advice if he had not been so obsessed with the idea that the Indian experience afforded a safe guide in Irish emergencies. It was hard to make him perceive that if we had tried to ram this system of administration down the throats of the Irish local authorities we should have had endless trouble. MacDonnell was able and strong-willed, but he underestimated the fighting qualities of the local authorities, and it took him some time to realize that, unlike in the case of India, there were eighty members of Parliament watching every act of the heads of departments, who were quite ready to worry the life out of the Chief Secretary over ad-

ministrative acts of the very smallest importance, and for this reason it was never worth while to dragoon the local authorities too much over their little lapses.

Lord Dudley was a wonderfully good all-round sportsman. He kept a racing cutter at Kingstown, for the one design matches, with which he won many flags during the season, and no one could handle a boat better than he in a thresh to windward in hard weather. He was a crack shot and took Rockingham, the King Harman seat in Co. Roscommon, for the shooting. He had a fishing lodge in Connemara and could throw a salmon fly against any man in Ireland. He rode to hounds well and was a good golfer, though not a very considerate one, as he would think nothing of keeping people waiting behind him for a quarter of an hour while he drove off practice shots from the tee. On Saturdays and competition days there would be a regular howl of dismay when players saw the Viceregal motors drive up to the links.

Another thing that somewhat affected his popularity was that although he was rich and open-handed in money matters he was utterly careless and indolent about his payments, and kept people an unconscionable time waiting for their money, without realizing how inconvenient it must be to them.

One instance of his extravagance was told me by a member of his staff. Perceiving on getting out of bed at the Viceregal Lodge that his hair wanted cutting one morning, he ordered Truefitt to be wired for. Next day his man told him Truefitt had

King Edward at Kylemore

Queen Alexandra and Princess Victoria received at Kylemore
by the agent of the estate and his wife

arrived by night mail and wanted to get back to London by the evening boat. But Dudley said he had an important race at Kingstown and could not stop to have his hair cut, and Truefitt's man must wait till next day. Next day he motored down to Meath, and on returning found that he had to go to London, and he was only just able to catch the boat, and had not time to think of Truefitt or his hair.

On arriving in London he observed, to his surprise, that his hair still wanted cutting, so he had Truefitt summoned by telephone, and his hair was cut before he went out. Next day he returned to Dublin, and his man reminded him that Truefitt was waiting to cut his hair.

"Too late, too late," said Dudley; "send him back to London. Why can't these people come when they are wanted"!

Lord Dudley developed strong Nationalist leanings, much to the annoyance and amazement of his own political party. He was supposed to have been greatly influenced in his views on this subject by Walter Callan, his private secretary, who was a son of a well-known Nationalist M.P.

CHAPTER XVII

THE VISIT OF KING EDWARD VII

LORD DUDLEY was real good, entertaining company, and it was rather a diverting experience to have a Viceroy who held himself absolutely free and unfettered in his acts and utterances. He spared no efforts to persuade the King to come to Ireland, and carried his point. The visit was a great success and brought to Dublin trade a few weeks of unexampled prosperity. Lord Dudley surpassed himself in the Viceregal hospitality, and the royal party's reception quite exceeded their expectations.

It may be that Lord Dudley's irrepressible Home Rule sentiments had something to do with the cordiality of the multitudes towards the Viceregal pageantry, but in every respect the country showed its appreciation of His Majesty's presence.

Pleased with his friendly reception in the capital, His Majesty determined to visit the wilds of Connemara and Kerry. Horace Plunkett and I were asked to submit an itinerary of a trip which would take in as much as possible of the Irish scenery, and at the same time give a good idea of the life of the people in the congested districts. This itinerary was submitted to the Lord Lieutenant and approved, after which Horace Plunkett and I were commissioned to go over the route and to see that all

Queen Alexandra visiting Cabins in the West

Queen Alexandra at Leenane

arrangements were duly made for the transport of the King, his retinue and his luggage.

Motors were not easy to get in those days, and the King only brought one, but Horace Plunkett, Lord Dudley, Sir William Goff, Cyril Ward and I lent ours, and any reliable ones available for hire were also secured. The Royal party disembarked in Killary Bay, and it was settled that the procession of motors was to meet them there to drive them past the beautiful lakes of Fee and Much to Tully, a route which brought them through the most thickly populated and poorest districts, after which we went *via* Letterfrack and Kylemore Castle and from Kylemore to Recess for lunch. From there the motors were to take the party to Galway, and thence they were to steam on to Kenmare, drive from there to Lord Lansdowne's at Dereens for lunch, proceed thence to Castletown and embark in a battleship for Queenstown.

Horace Plunkett and I had established little local committees at Leenane to select interesting things to show the King, such as native industries and so forth. When we came down the day before, the chairman of the committee, in his enthusiasm, wanted to give an exhibition of boat-building and lace-making by imported tradesmen and materials.

"We have none of these things here," he said, "and we really ought to have something interesting to show him."

We explained to him that if the King wanted to see boat-building he was going to Belfast, where Messrs. Harland and Wolff were available, so he abandoned the idea, but he was still of opinion that

as the King must have heard a good deal about famines in the West, he would be "mighty pleased" to be shown a case of distress, and there was a little old man living up in the boreen in the worst house in Ireland, on outdoor relief, and if the King would see him, it would give him an idea of the real thing. This, however, we also vetoed.

The fleet was in Killary Harbour the following morning, and the Royal party came off the yacht looking very ill after an awful night at sea. In spite of their sickness, however, they went gallantly through all the business of sight-seeing and presentations, and very soon revived. The Catholic curate, on being introduced to the King, went down on his knees and kissed the ring on his hand, no doubt feeling that he could not show him less deference than he paid to a bishop. The King, surprised at this, was even more taken aback when a burly peasant, thinking it would be right to follow his spiritual adviser's example, dashed forth, grabbed the King's hand, flopped down also, and looked as if he were going to take a bite out of it.

The Oldest Inhabitant, thinking he should make his presence felt, shouted for three cheers for the King, when he suddenly realized that he did not know what his title was. However, he made a shot at it and roared out "Three cheers for King Henry the Sixth." The populace were quite satisfied, and "Three cheers for King Henry the Sixth" was the cry all along the roads and up the mountainsides. The King did not understand this at first, and beckoned to me and asked me what the people knew

King Edward VII at Aasleagh. "Three Cheers for King Henry the Sixth"

At Glenagimla. King Edward and Lord Dudley

about Henry VI, and when I explained that they thought that was His Majesty's title he accepted the cheers with the usual acknowledgment.

Chamberlain, the new head of the Royal Irish Constabulary, was very nervous about his responsibility for the King's safe conduct through the west. It would never have done to have had an enormous display of force, still less would it have done to have allowed the King to be molested, so he had collected an enormous force of constabulary from all over the country. He spread them all along the roads disguised as tourists, under the impression that as the King's visit might be expected to attract tourists this guard would not be noticed. But what rather spoiled this precaution was that every man was dressed alike; straw hat, Norfolk jacket, watch-chain from breast pocket to buttonhole, knickerbockers and bicycle. Every man was exactly the same distance apart, 100 yards or so, and all were lying in a carefully rehearsed loose and careless attitude beside the road in the character of the weary cyclist. But what further spoilt the effect was that when the King's car was passing each man sprang to "attention," clicked his heels and saluted smartly, and then resumed his full length attitude until the King was out of sight, when the bikes were mounted and the procession of straw-hatted tourists wended their way to Westport. I was travelling in the motor with the King and Queen, and he asked me who these men were who kept jumping up. I was saved from having to make an explanation, as at that moment we suddenly turned a corner and the village of Tully came

into view, where an enormous crowd was assembled. The curate here was reputed to be a desperate firebrand, and a really dangerous man, and as there had been a wicked secret society here I was much afraid that we might be in for trouble, especially as we had no guard except for the sporadic tourists aforesaid. My relief was therefore intense when I was near enough to see a huge banner stretched across the road with "Friend of Our Pope" emblazoned on it, and underneath it the firebrand capering about with an illuminated address of welcome.

The enthusiasm of the country people was tremendous all along the route, and the well-to-do people, such as shopkeepers and others, had their children dressed up to the nines with beautiful bouquets for the Queen, who took them all with a kindly word to each, but I think she prized most of all a little bouquet of white and purple heather which a feeble old peasant woman with a shawl over her head ventured to offer with a trembling hand and a prayer for a long life.

In Connemara, Mr. Johnny O'Loughlin, proprietor of the Zetland Arms Hotel, a real typical Irishman, was quite beside himself with excitement as to how the King could be given a suitable reception. Finally he conceived the idea of a cavalry escort. He realized that it could not keep up with the motors for long, so he arranged that the escort should meet us a mile from the hotel, and from this point they would see the King to the hotel in style. The word went forth that every man and boy in Connemara who had a horse, pony or ass should be

Visitors from Westport to see the King

Watching the arrival of the Royal Party

there at the appointed time to escort the King and Queen in honour to the hotel. They were to stand up on their stirrups and cheer till they were hoarse; they were not to cease cheering, and they must keep galloping beside the King until he got in. They were to encamp round the hotel while he was at lunch, and afterwards to continue to act as a guard of honour when he drove up in a carriage to the marble quarries.

The motor swung round the Lough Ina road, turning into the straight for Recess, when we suddenly found ourselves in the midst of an amazing mob of horsemen: farm-horses, cart-horses, ponies, donkeys, of all sizes and descriptions, mounted by men and boys in rags and tatters, black coats, flannels or home-made stuffs. Some had saddles, others none; some had reins, some straw ropes. There they were all waiting on the high ground up the mountainside to see the arrival of the cars, and the moment the cars came into sight they were off down the mountainside like an avalanche, yelling, cheering, laughing, knocking each other over and leaping over the ditch on to the road with a speed that sent most of them over the road on to the bog at the other side.

I happened to see Johnny O'Loughlin amongst them, and knew many of the people. I was, therefore, able to assure the Royal party that this wild phantasmagoria of flying horsemen was quite unexpected by us, and was evidently intended to take the place of the Life Guards or whatever His Majesty's escort is on such an occasion.

The guard of honour of O'Loughlin's Royal

Connemara Mixed Cavalry formed a cordon round the hotel to secure the Royal party from intruders during lunch. Afterwards His Majesty commanded Mr. O'Loughlin to be presented to him, who, in his capacity of Commander of the Forces, made a most profound obeisance.

The utterances of monarchs on momentous occasions usually find a place in history, and the notable remark of King Edward the Seventh to the Queen, which just reached the gratified ears of Mr. O'Loughlin, to wit: "That of all the courtiers he ever had standing around him not one of them ever made him such an iligant bow as Mr. Johnny O'Loughlin," it is to be hoped will duly be recorded in the annals of the Irish nation.

The marble quarries visited by the Royal party were up a mile of precipitous road at the back of the hotel. The stone is of the lovely green serpentine variety which takes a beautiful polish and is used for anything from the pillars of a church to a pair of sleeve links. The finest specimen, I believe, is the pillar in the Mutual Insurance Office in New York.

Mr. Peter Rafferty, a returned American, was the lessee of the quarries, and hearing that the King and Queen were going to honour him with a visit, he had sent two specially selected pieces of marble to Birmingham to be carved and polished as a silver mounted inkstand and a little Irish harp, the inkstand being for the King and the harp for the Queen. He showed them to Horace Plunkett and to me the day before, and was immensely proud of them and kept producing them for us over and over

King Edward in the Weaver's House at Leenane. The author and Sir Horace Plunkett in the foreground

King Edward leaving a Cabin in the West

again to look at. Then Plunkett wickedly asked him if it was not rather hard on Princess Victoria to be left out, and would not she be a little jealous? Rafferty was horrorstruck:

"Begorra, ther'll be a b——y row in the palace over this, and it's all my fault so it is; sure I never heard tell about the Princess coming. What's to be done at all? Oh, my God, this is fearful! Well, the only thing for me is to give the inkstand to the King and to put the little harp between the two Royal ladies, and then clear out and let them fight it out among themselves as to who is to keep it."

Surrounded by the yelling Connemara Cavalry, the King was driven in the carriage and pair up to the quarries, and Mr. Rafferty, having duly made his presentation, beat a hasty retreat and thereby avoided witnessing the inevitable painful scene between the Queen and the Princess over the ownership of the little harp for which history would certainly have held him to be entirely responsible.

Some years afterwards Mrs. Birrell was staying at Recess while I was there, and meeting Peter Rafferty outside the hotel I brought him into the drawing-room and introduced him to her, thinking she would like to hear his account of the Royal visit to his quarries. Among other things, he told her of an incident about Queen Alexandra which had made a tremendous impression on him.

"The Princess Victoria," he said, "in stepping out of the carriage had brushed her skirt against the wheel and had splashed it with yellow sand. And the Queen," said Peter, "the Queen of England,

mind ye, stooped down as humble as the poorest woman in the land and brushed the Princess's skirt with her own hand! There she was with the First Lord of the Admiralty beside her, who she could have ordered to do it, and other great lords and generals, but no! humble she was, and humbly she brushed the skirt with her own hand before everyone, and an example to every one. Oh, dear God, the humbleness of it!"

Mrs. Birrell was greatly amused at the gestures with which Peter personated the Queen, and he was attracted with her so much that he proceeded to tell her the tragedy of his life. How his wife, when dying in America, had asked him to be sent for, and how her daughter had wired "Mother dying, come at once," but the telegram read, "Mother dead, come at once," and how he hadn't the heart to go back to the old home with the wife gone from it for ever. It was a most touching story, but he seemed to think that, when speaking to a grand lady like Mrs. Birrell, he must always outwardly appear smiling and pleasant, so although his heart was torn over the description of how she kept saying each morning, "Has he come yet?" "Will he be here to-day?" he told it with a forced smile all the time, and with a kind of tearful, hysterical laugh, and I was desperately afraid at first that Mrs. Birrell might not have understood him and met his piteous laughing narrative with an answering smile.

But no—she was very grave and deeply moved, and the look of womanly sympathy on her face for poor Peter I shall never forget, and when he finished his story with a cry of "She died without ever

King Edward VII visiting a Lacemaker at Leenane

The King leaving the Lacemaker's Cabin

knowing why I didn't come," she just put her hand on his and said to him, in a low voice, " She knows now, Mr. Rafferty."

Afterwards I walked up to the quarry with Mr. Rafferty, silent but greatly comforted at having unbosomed his soul to a woman who understood. I said to him, " What do you think of Mrs. Birrell, Peter ? " He stopped short, raised both his arms to heaven and cried out, " Great God, man, she's humbler than the Queen ! "

CHAPTER XVIII

MACDONNELL'S DEVOLUTION SCHEME

WYNDHAM'S Land Act was a brilliant conception as an incentive towards the transfer of land from owner to occupier. The bonus of 12 per cent. to the life owner was a master stroke, as so many of the life owners with mortgaged estates had been getting little or nothing for years. Therefore the chance of putting hard cash to the value of 12 per cent. of the value of the estate into their own pockets was irresistible. It was rather rough on the remainder men on settled estates, as the life owners would often press the trustees to sell at a bad price rather than that they should lose their chance of getting the bonus in cash.

The Land Purchase Act went like wildfire, and with its passage through the House Wyndham's popularity reached its zenith. If he had been a wise man he would have then resigned, and the success of his regime in Ireland would have marked him out for the highest office in the future.

But flushed with his success, he wanted to do more. Perhaps he had an idea of being able to settle the eternal question of Irish self-government, or perhaps he meditated tackling the Irish University question, but at all events he remained in Ireland and threw himself into a scheme of Irish industrial revival, and left Anthony MacDonnell

to send out his *ballons d'essai* for any other reforms which it might be opportune to attempt.

Unionism was going strong at the time, the prosperity of the country under the Balfours with their uncompromising adherence to the Union had driven Home Rule entirely into the shade. Moreover, the northern members had become a powerful influence with the Government, and there could have been no more inopportune time for re-opening the question of Home Rule. Then like a bolt from the blue came the Devolution scheme, under which Irish administration was to pass gradually into the hands of an Irish Parliament with an executive responsible to it.

Lord Dunraven and Anthony MacDonnell were supposed to be the joint authors of this scheme, and one may speculate now, whether they were imbued for the moment with some superhuman foresight of coming events, and whether their scheme, if it had won through, might not have saved Ireland from the tribulations of six years of anarchy.

But be this as it may, the scheme was not practical politics at the time, and it aroused much indignation by its appearance as a quasi-Government proposal, which it acquired from the fact of the Under-Secretary's identification with it. It got its quietus from John Atkinson, the Attorney-General, who read it with amazement in the London papers one morning, and straightway went over to his constituency and at a public meeting repudiated it as a Government measure, demonstrated the probable danger, denied that the Government knew

anything about it, and denounced the action of MacDonnell in daring to attempt to subvert the first principles of the Government he was pledged to serve.

Atkinson's attitude had widespread approval from Unionists all over the country, and the feeling was so strong against the Devolution scheme that Wyndham himself had to repudiate it, whereupon MacDonnell defended himself by declaring that Wyndham knew about it, and had practically authorized it. He was able to give the substance of his letters to Wyndham, which seemed to indicate that this was so. There is great doubt as to whether Wyndham really knew all the details of it, although he admitted having received a letter from MacDonnell. I think that the strong probability is that he did not, and that he looked upon it as another of MacDonnell's sky signs, and one about which he had better keep an open mind. But whatever may have been his opinion as to its desirability, his recognition of what was in the air seemed plain enough from the correspondence, and his popularity with his own party dropped to zero. He made a most unhappy figure in Parliament in trying to convince the House of his *bona fides*, and took it terribly to heart. He would easily have lived it down if he had been made of the coarser material of the average politician, but he was a refined and sensitive man and it preyed upon him, and I doubt whether mentally or physically he was ever the same.

In spite of the success of the Land Bill, a new land agitation was sprung upon the country, as the

local Nationalists started a campaign of intimidation to force the owners to sell, under Wyndham's Act, at terms involving most unreasonable sacrifice, especially as the landlords were all willing to accept offers which would have enabled the tenants to secure ownership at annuities which would have been small in comparison with their existing rents.

MacDonnell did all in his power for peace, but he made the mistake of believing that this agitation could have been overcome by negotiations with the local leaders and clergy, and that it would have been a tactical blunder to put it down by any display of force. This suited the local agitators perfectly; they cared nothing for his negotiations, and all they wanted to be sure was that the police would not interfere. Having realized that the Government were not going to take a strong hand the most cruel intimidation went on. The outlook was very threatening, but by this time Wyndham's nerves became so shaky that he was ordered complete rest, and Walter Long was sent over to take his place as Chief Secretary.

CHAPTER XIX

WALTER LONG

WALTER LONG as a Chief was a very remarkable change after Wyndham. The two men were the exact antithesis of each other. Wyndham, charming, visionary, scintillating, often incomprehensible, and thinking and speaking over our heads, to our great discomfort, but holding us all by his suavity and the charm of his personality.

Walter Long, a direct, plain spoken, unequivocal English gentleman of sound judgment and great experience, who knew what he wanted and was the easiest person in the world to understand. He commended you if you carried out his instructions wisely, and damned you in heaps if you did not.

Walter Long had not been interesting himself in Irish administration very closely, although he was half an Irishman himself by birth, and he came over with an open mind and apparently without any subtle theories as to what was dangerous and what was tactful in dealing with open agitation and defiance of the law.

He soon heard that there was gross intimidation going on, and that people were not allowed to transact their business in peace, and he wanted furiously to know why? What were the police doing? Was this letter he had received this

morning from an old Galway lady of eighty years of age true, when she said that every Sunday the people headed by a brass band came and encamped at her gate and threatened her with violence, had sent away all her servants, and driven off her cattle and broken her fences while the police looked on and only took notes? Who gave these orders for the police not to interfere? He must see the police officers at once. Let them be summoned by wire!

What transpired at the meeting is known only to those present, but the following Sunday the little old lady, trembling and peering out from behind her half-closed shutters at the assembling mob, thought her mind was going. Were her eyes deceiving her? Could this be a dream? The apologetic police usually on the edge of the crowd with their notebooks, so deferential to the local leaders, what had come over them? Why, they were charging the crowd! Was this the rehearsal of a pageant of the Balaclava charge? Why, there was a constable driving his bayonet through the big drum! There was that fair-haired constable chasing the flageolet player and laying into him with his instrument. The brass instrument seemed to be flying over the demesne wall! Now the platform was down,—where were the people all running to? What was the meaning of it all?

Poor little old lady! The sergeant who came to see her was so nice about it, and she was ashamed of herself for crying so much before him, but she really had had a dreadful time and suffered a lot. The sergeant told her that he had made it pretty plain to the mob that if they didn't let her alone

the Government would put a policeman behind every bush to protect her; those were his orders, and she could get her servants back now, and he laughed and cheered her up, and said there was a new Chief Secretary, and "mebbe it is just a new idea of killing Home Rule by kindness that he had in his head."

It was very curious how quickly the intimidation ceased under the firm hand. A landowner in Mayo told me that before that incident, the workmen fencing his mountain had said that they were going to take the mountain and parcel it off among themselves, and would work no more at his fences. The breaking up of the meeting just referred to had taken place on Friday, and on the following Monday his workmen all returned, and not a word was said of the forcible taking of his land.

Walter Long's first efforts were directed at restoring the confidence of the police and making them understand that the Government would support them through thick and thin in putting down intimidation and crime. Very soon after his arrival he travelled all over the country inspecting them and encouraging them and their officers, and in the end they would have done anything in the world for him. He had a theory that a Chief Secretary as representing English rule should never be niggardly in money matters; that on the contrary he should be so open-handed and liberal as to impress on the people that the English meant well to them and sought to make nothing out of Ireland, but rather to spend money in the country. He carried out this principle him-

Mr. Walter Long's Relief Works at Achill

Mr. Walter Long's Relief Works at Achill

self to an extreme, and the money flowed like water. I have often wondered what he dropped over his Irish Secretaryship. He had a hunting stable in Meath, and a four-in-hand in Dublin; he entertained everybody sumptuously, and when he went on a tour, instead of having a motor or two he generally had seven or eight which he filled with his English friends. He always took two or three sitting-rooms in every hotel, and his tips to the servants fairly took their breath away.

I went with him on all his tours, and generally drove him in my motor, as I knew all the roads in the country and was able to give him all the information he desired about places and people. Sir Anthony MacDonnell had been obliged to undergo a serious operation soon after Walter Long's arrival, and during the whole of the latter's time at the Irish Office MacDonnell was convalescing and unable to be of any assistance.

John Atkinson, who was with us on all the tours, was gifted with an Irish wit of the rarest and most delightful kind. It was not built up on the stories he told, although he had an endless variety of them. The charm of his humour lay in his quaint comments upon passing events, his descriptions of the people we met and the interviews with them, his wonderful sense of the humorous side of things and his power of demonstrating it to others. Like many men who have the anxieties of office on their shoulders he was very silent and absent-minded at times, but he shook off the absorbing cares of an Attorney-General when he was with us, and was always in the best of form; his

humour and the brightness of his personality had an effect on our spirits like the sun sparkling on the morning sea.

He met a kindred spirit in the witty Father John Flatley, of Leenane, when we were touring in the West, and to hear these two discussing Irish experiences and things in general round the fire at Leenane Hotel amply repaid us for a terrible day's drive across the bogs in the teeth of a gale, and sent us to bed with aching sides and a feeling that the world was a very pleasant place after all!

The first meeting of Walter Long, John Atkinson and Father Flatley was rather characteristic of his Reverence. We had motored to Mulrany Hotel from Ballina, past the Pontoon lakes, where we had the experience of being chased along a narrow road by a frightened galloping horse with a cart behind it. We had gone slowly past the horse, seeing that it was terrified, but when we had done so the man who was holding it began beating it, whereupon it reared up and, mad with fear, bolted up the road after us. I couldn't accelerate fast enough to keep in front, and Walter Long shouted to me that the horse and cart would be right on top of us in half a minute, so I had to risk the ditch which, happily, was dry and shallow, and he went past us like a whirlwind with the swaying cart, missing us by about a foot.

Next morning we got up at Mulrany to find a perfect blizzard of rain and hail. I wanted to put off going, as I knew what we should get on the bleak bog road between Westport and Leenane, but Long wouldn't hear of any delay, so we faced the gale. The rain and hail in my face was so blinding that

I really do not know how I managed to keep the car on the road. The gale was much too fierce to enable us to carry the hood. Coming into Leenane I saw a familiar figure in an old tarpaulin coat and a sou'wester struggling ahead down against the storm; it was Father Flatley sure enough, so I hailed him and introduced him to the Chief Secretary and Attorney-General.

When Father Flatley heard who the visitors were he bolted like a shot into the hotel in great excitement, and rounded up the hotel-keeper, the boots, the waiter and the ostler, made them get into the coats and mufflers hanging in the hall as quickly as they could, and rushed them in to Walter Long as a large and influential deputation from the priests and people of Leenane desiring Treasury facilities for the development of local industries.

The deputation stood sheepishly in the dining-room while Father Flatley made a tremendous harangue, and when he had finished he turned abruptly to the deputation and said, "Be off with ye now, ye've said quite enough" (not one of them had opened his lips), "let the Chief Secretary have a little peace and quiet now for God's sake." With that he pushed them all into the hall, where they divested themselves of their coats and mufflers and reverted to their usual avocations, while his Reverence joined us at dinner and presented the Chief Secretary and the Attorney-General with a character study of Irish life that they must have remembered for many a day.

The account duly appeared in the Dublin papers ("communicated") of the large and influential depu-

tation introduced by the parish priest to the Chief Secretary, giving his speech in full and indicating that the parish priest had done good service in impressing on the Irish Government the urgent need of the development of the country by works of public utility.

Next day the storm had abated to some extent, and Father Flatley came down to see us off to the Congested Districts Board steamer *Granuaile.* Atkinson was a shocking bad sailor, and not liking the look of the weather he told Father Flatley he should give an example of the power of the Church by calming the sea. Father Flatley threw a weather eye aloft and, seeing the scudding clouds and the white horses at the mouth of the bay, he assured Atkinson that he would be very glad to oblige him, only that the power of the Church did not extend below high water mark!

Father Flatley was gifted with a fluent and virile pen, and by means of it exercised a great deal of influence with Chief Secretaries and officials of his acquaintance. He was thus able to secure many benefits for his parishioners from time to time when Government relief measures were in progress.

Mr. Walter Long's Relief Works at Achill

"The power of the Church does not extend below high-water mark"

CHAPTER XX

MOTORING MEMORIES

WHEN the General Election came and with it the debacle of the Conservative Party, Walter Long was much pressed by the Irish Unionists to stand for South Dublin, and was triumphantly returned with a record poll. Every Unionist in the constituency worked hard for him. Even my chauffeur asked for permission to have a day off to go round and canvass for him. This was given, and in the evening a police constable came to the house and said to me in a mysterious sort of way: "I don't like the way that man of yours is going on in the village below. Has he been drinking or what?" I said, "No; he had merely asked for a day off to canvass for Mr. Long." "Well," said the constable, "it's not my idea of canvassing. He is going round the village with a blackthorn and banging at the doors and shouting through the windows and keyholes: 'If any man in there says Long's no good, let him come outside and I'll break his eye for him.' Sure that's a quare way for to be explainin' the Chief Secretary's politics to the people."

Long was a tremendous worker and got through his papers very rapidly, and in the way of personally directing the work of his departments he did

more than any Chief Secretary except Gerald Balfour. As he had been President of the English Local Government Board, the advantage to us of having his advice on local government matters was inestimable. It was wonderful what he could stand in the way of fatigue. I got a telephone message from him one dark winter morning asking me to call for him at his Lodge in the Park in my car as early as possible. I found to my dismay when I got there he had to see Colonel Saunderson urgently about a very important matter, and as trains did not suit I was to drive him to Castle Saunderson and get him back in time for dinner, as he had to attend the R.I.C. boxing tournament afterwards. I pointed out to him that Castle Saunderson was 80 miles away over a very bad road, and that 160 miles on wet rutty roads in the middle of winter would be rather tiring for him before his entertainment. He pooh-poohed this, so on we went.

It was all right going there, as the morning was fine, and we did it in wonderful time, but before we started for home heavy rain came on, and it was dark as pitch at 5 o'clock. The lamps were bad, the roads almost under water, while I could scarcely see the road owing to the splashes of mud and the wet on the rain screen. All the time Walter Long kept looking at his watch and saying, "Shove along, we're cutting it too fine." I was a wreck when I got home that evening after having been at the wheel for 160 miles on a skiddy road, but he was fresh as paint, and put through a heavy dinner and a late night at the

constabulary meeting and was not one penny the worse.

Long took a great interest in the relief works, and insisted that no money should be spent in relief except upon works of utility, and under his instructions we made some splendid bridges and roads. There was one ruling of his which I was recently reminded of, a regular judgment of Solomon. I was carrying out some relief works for the unemployed four or five years ago, and a curate in the West, who had just completed the building of a little church, begged me to employ the people in clearing a large, unsightly mound on one side of his new church and building a boundary wall. A little " non-sectarian " wall, he said, was all he asked.

I had never heard of that kind of wall, and asked him to explain. He said it was a definition of Walter Long's. He reminded me that, while the clergy had always assisted the Local Government Board to select useful works, they were thought to be too prone to press for works for the adornment of Church premises, and the inspectors feared that if this went on, questions might be asked in Parliament as to whether the public money was used for sectarian purposes, so they were extremely careful never to allow the works to be on Church property. But a rough wall happened to be very badly needed to keep the cattle from trespassing on some church premises in a very poverty-stricken part of the country when Walter Long was there, and he was urged to make an exception in the case, especially as

every penny of the money would go on unskilled labour. I give his official decision in the curate's own words.

"Mind out now," says he, "for if you build a big wall with a stone coping or a railing on it, that would be sectarian business, and ye'll not be let do it with Government money; but if it is only a small little wall *ye can lep over*, that would be non-sectarian, and you may fire away and it'll be passed as a relief work."

This rule has held good ever since, and so now, if one observes a parish priest with his biretta on the back of his head and flying coat tails "lepping" over little stone walls, it must be understood that it is not due to the exuberance of his animal spirits, but is only an effort to prove, to the satisfaction of a Local Government inspector, the non-sectarian character of a church wall.

I told the curate that in Connemara I had been shown a real good, substantial wall round a little church on one of the islands, which was said to have been made as a relief work, and I knew that the canon who was responsible for it —a portly gentleman—could not possibly have carried his lumber over that wall in a flying leap.

"I know that place you are talking about," said the curate, "the canon was hard set to know how to get a decent non-sectarian wall built, for he was no great things at leppin', but he got hold of a young grasshopper of a curate from East Galway and he kept him leppin' the wall with each row of stones, and he was not bet till he got it up near five feet. Oh, he satisfied the

Mr. Walter Long's "non-Sectarian Wall"

Mr. Long at Phoula Phuica

inspector, and there is not a more non-sectarian wall in the country than that one, high as it is."

The advent of the motor-car made a very great difference to Chief Secretaries in their administration. Heretofore, the Englishmen who came to Ireland in this capacity derived their knowledge of the country and its people from a study of the map on the wall of their rooms in Dublin Castle and from the police reports.

A Chief Secretary desiring to convince himself about local conditions in say Ballycroy or Dingle, upon which there were conflicting reports, would have had to go by the morning train on one day and drive by hack car or carriage for two or three days, and would get back on the fifth day. But with the motors, he could start by the morning train with his motor in the van, reach the railway terminus about 2 o'clock, and a few hours in the motor that evening and a few hours in the morning before the start of the limited mail back to Dublin at 1 o'clock, would have taken him over as much country as he could possibly have covered with horse-drawn vehicles in a week. But what a commotion the motors caused when they first made their appearance on the road! The car-drivers leaped off, tore off their coats and threw them over their horses' heads, while the passengers got off the road on to the fields screaming out that we were killing the people.

I remember one old man that fell on his back in jumping off a car, and he lay with his legs working like a beetle shouting out, "Ye're after killing a man, I'm the man that's killed." He then picked

himself up, and he implored us to report the fatality at the next police barracks we passed. After a bit the fact began to get home in their minds that motorists were a well-to-do class and paid handsomely for damages done. The claims made were preposterous. On one occasion I was driving from Ballyconeely to Roundstone when I saw an old man sitting on the back of a young pony behind two huge panniers of seaweed. When the motor came in sight the old man took fright and began belabouring the pony, which plunged about till the old man fell on his back in the soft bog with the whole of the seaweed on top of him. We stopped the car and went over the bog and caught the pony for him; we found him with his head poked out from under the seaweed, roaring out "Compensation, compensation!" To quiet him we shouted out how much, and put our hands in our pockets. He struggled out from under his load, shook himself, and said in a hollow voice, "Ten pounds!" I said I thought that a most reasonable claim, but I had only a half a crown on me and would he accept that, to which he replied, "I will, so."

One other incident I remember on the Belmullet road outside Bangor. I turned a corner coming into the village and found a herd of cows on the road. I slowed down and thought there was just room to get through, when a young heifer switched herself round in front of me and the radiator pushed her over. The car was stopped by the impact, but in some incomprehensible manner she managed to kick her hind-legs through

Early Motoring Days. Mr. Walter Long on Tour

Mr. Walter Long's Motor Casualty

the front wheel. We had to jack up the car, take off the wheel, push the car back, and then put the wheel on again, while the heifer, thus freed, got up and shook herself. She did not seem much the worse, and when one of my passengers went to see if she was injured, she galloped off with her tail in the air. Meanwhile, a crowd had collected; among others, John Costello, owner of the cow, who set up a solo of lamentations, the crowd acting as chorus in emphasis of everything he said.

"She is dead, she is dead," said Costello mournfully, waving his hand towards the retreating animal. "She was the only support of my wife and strugglin' family, and now she is dead."

I pointed out that no cow had been known to gallop after death.

"Well, she'll not live the day," he said.

"She won't," said the chorus; "she'll drop down dead in the house forninst the dresser."

"She cost me eight pounds at the fair of Ballina," wailed Mr. Costello.

"She did," said the chorus; "and nine pounds ten."

"She would have had a calf in September," continued Costello.

"She would," sang the chorus; "and a rale good calf."

Cattle are not supposed to be on the road unless they are being driven to a fair or a farm, so I asked him why he had his cows straying all over the road, whereupon a little old woman on the outskirts of the crowd, whom I had observed

running down from the mountainside when the accident occurred, pushed her way to the front and cried out :

" I was driving them to a fair."

This left me speechless, so I told Costello that if the cow died I'd get it valued by a vet and pay the full value, or I'd give him £5 on the spot in satisfaction of all claims. He promptly accepted the £5 declaring that I was a grand gentleman. " He is," sang the chorus. " 'Tis he that's good to the poor." The bargain made we adjourned to McNulty's hotel in Bangor and got a receipt from Costello. I heard afterwards from McNulty that the cow had had a fine calf, and both mother and child were doing as well as could be expected.

A queer character was Pat McNulty, and the story of the shifts and dodges to which he had to resort in order to make a living out of his little public house would fill a book. He advertised the Grouse Hotel as the ideal spot for a quiet, remote " retreat among the purple moorlands, far from the beaten track of the tourists, for tired souls who desired to be away from the hum of life, and alone with nature." He omitted to state in the advertisement that although it was in the heart of the purple moorlands it was also in the centre of a wretched noisy little village.

An unfortunate young curate from the slums of a great English city, lured by the picture of solitude and beauty portrayed by McNulty's advertisement, had come there with his young bride. Although it was the very last thing in the world they anticipated or wished for, there was

nothing to do but to make the best of it, and as McNulty was absolutely frantic in his efforts to make them comfortable, and such a good fellow at heart, they treated it as an experience and took long walks and got along very well. The only thing that perturbed them was McNulty's objection if they did not come down in time for breakfast and the rashers and eggs were likely to be wasted. "Arrah, come down ower that, will yez?" he thundered at the door. "Yer breakfast'll be spiled on yez. Get up out of bed now." And then persuasively, "Sure ye'll be there again to-night!"

One rather characteristic episode of his *ménage* I remember. A Mr. Kennedy, a very pompous, self-satisfied old member of the Congested Districts Board, after a long tiring journey from Ballycroy, arrived at Bangor looking for a car for Belmullet. He met McNulty at the entrance of the village and stated his needs, and although McNulty had long since given up keeping post cars, the chance of getting £1 from this wealthy-looking old gentleman was too good to be lost. He had an old car, but his horse was a wreck, used only for carting manure, utterly unable to proceed at a pace beyond a walk, and had not been under a post car for many years. So Mr. Kennedy was hustled into the kitchen of the Grouse Hotel, and made a lot of by the family before the fire, till McNulty brought round the old horse with loud cries of "Whoa now! Aha, would ye! Steady, boy, quiet now." Mr. Kennedy was then conducted out and hoisted on the car, tucked carefully up

in a rug with bundles of hay at his feet, care being taken that McNulty's huge frame occulted the view of "Liberator," as the mare was christened for this occasion.

"Now, Mick," said McNulty to the gloomy youth who was charged with the task of piloting Liberator to Belmullet, "remember that this gentleman wants a good drive, and a safe drive, but not a fast drive!"

If these were his wishes, the last of them was certainly fulfilled. Liberator stopped every few minutes for breath on the way up the hills, walked down the descents for the simple reason that she would have fallen on her head if she had attempted to trot, and walked on the flats to be ready for the next hill. She finally landed Mr. Kennedy at Belmullet, ten miles off, after a good drive, a safe drive, but not a fast drive, for it occupied just four hours.

Ireland would have been a perfect paradise for motoring if it had not been for the terror it inspired among the people in the wild and picturesque parts of the country, which had the greatest attraction for motorists. There was no police interference with speed. On the contrary they used to wave the motorists on to greater efforts; but eventually the pride of the Irish in the disregard of all attempts to put a speed limit to the progress of a nation's motoring, led to many English people coming over with huge motors to gratify their lust for speed. So at last police traps had to be started. I believe I had the distinction of owning the first motor which was

caught in the act of transgressing the law. I had just bought a ten h.p. Argyle from McTaggart, who was driving it out to Foxrock to deliver it when he ran into a trap on the Donnybrook road. When they stopped the car to take the name and address of the driver, they announced that the mile had been covered in a minute and a half.

"How many miles an hour is that?" said McTaggart.

"We won't mind that," said the sergeant getting out his notebook.

"Oh, that's all very well," said McTaggart; "but I am entitled to know at what rate I was travelling."

"Come up here, James," said the sergeant to the constable, "and we'll work this out." But here they became hopelessly muddled as the constable's calculations, which covered two pages of a notebook, showed a speed of four miles an hour.

"Oh, balderdash," said the sergeant. So he took his own method of calculating. "See here, now," he said; "ye done the mile in a minute and a half. A mile a minute is 60 miles an hour; a mile in half a minute is 30 miles an hour; you were doing 90 miles an hour. Gimme ye're name and address."

"My name," said the culprit, "is McTaggart, and I am a cycle and motor agent, and I let out bicycles on the hire system. I have a good many clients among the police, and it is pretty well known that if they are in arrears with their instalments McTaggart & Company don't press them very hard."

"Well, well now," said the sergeant obviously disconcerted.

McTaggart followed up his advantage. "Did you happen to notice my subscription to the D.M.P. Benevolent Fund?"

"Well, I didn't," said the sergeant apologetically.

"I dare say you saw the cup I presented for the D.M.P. sports, anyhow," added McTaggart.

This bowled over the sergeant completely. "Well, look here now, Mr. McTaggart," said he; "I'll tell you what we'll do, we'll leave this matter entirely in your hands."

"Very well," said McTaggart, "I think that will be fair to both sides." And with that he departed in triumph.

Walter Long's tenure of office was too short to enable him to undertake legislative reforms, but having been President of the Local Government Board and the Board of Agriculture he was much interested in the working of the Local Government Board in Ireland, the Congested Districts Board and the Agricultural Department. So far as the L.G.B. work was concerned, I profited exceedingly by his guidance, but I think Horace Plunkett did not encourage him to take any part in the direction of agriculture and technical instruction, no doubt dreading a break in the continuity of his policy. Had Long remained in office for another parliamentary session he would probably have insisted upon being President of the department in fact as well as in name.

Long was very popular with all classes and his departure was very much regretted. He was a great sportsman, free with his money, and wanted the best of everything for everybody. The largess he bestowed upon all servitors who did service for him staggered them, and I heard the queerest apotheosis of him from my chauffeur, a man with a large family, who drove me down to Kingstown to see him off. Lynch, the chauffeur in question, was leaning with his back against the car with his arms folded apostrophizing the departing steamer, and I heard him say to himself in a voice of the deepest melancholy:

"Good-bye, Misther Long, Mr. Walter Long; you're goin' away from Ireland, so y'are, and it'll be a long time before there will ever again be three pairs of boots bought in my house all in the one day."

Poor Lynch! he lost his life during the war; he was with me in all Long's journeys and most of Birrell's. He was a source of much amusement to them both and to me. Not that he tried to be humorous or thought he was humorous; on the contrary, he was always in deadly earnest and spoke like an oracle. As an example of his peculiar quality of thought, I may give one incident when I was touring in Scotland with him. I did not know the road, and seeing a man driving a dog-cart told Lynch to get down and stop him and ask the way to Killin. Lynch did so, and I saw the man pointing and directing with a wave of his arms and much volubility of speech, all in the broad Scotch vernacular. His gestures were

so clear that I almost understood what he meant, though I could not hear what he said. Lynch came back, climbed into the car and said, "He doesn't know." I said, "What nonsense! Doesn't know! Why, I saw him explaining the road to you quite plainly. You didn't understand him." "How would I understand them Scotchmen," said Lynch indignantly. "Why sure, the half of them don't understand what they're sayin' themselves."

Lynch had been a gardener before I trained him as chauffeur, and nothing in his new capacity impressed him so much as what he called "the diet" provided at the smart tourist hotels for the visitors' servants and chauffeurs, and the way he would drag into his conversation for weeks after a tour the names of the things he had eaten was most ludicrous. I remember hearing my wife asking him if the dahlias did well in the Recess garden. "They do not," he said, "the gardener came into the servants' room wan day when I was sittin' there 'ating me apricot fritther and sez he to me, 'them infernal dahlias has me desthroyed!' and that's the way I have it on me mind."

CHAPTER XXI

JAMES BRYCE

JAMES BRYCE succeeded Long, under Campbell-Bannerman's Ministry, with a mission to inaugurate a complete change of policy for Ireland. He was, I think, warned by MacDonnell, the Under-Secretary, certainly by some of the Irish members, that as I had been deep in the confidence of the Unionist Chief Secretary and had been appointed by the Balfours to the Commissionership and Vice-Presidency of the board, I was tarred with the Unionist brush and was not a trustworthy person from the Nationalist point of view.

It was certainly very amusing the way Bryce would discuss things with me and ask my advice; tell me of his proposals and suddenly check himself, looking extremely uncomfortable. But he was a very likeable and interesting man, and I always tried to do everything I possibly could to meet his wishes and make the responsibility for Local Government administration a light one for him.

I think he realized this, for during the last month of his stay he was very open and confidential with me, and when I went to say good-bye to him he said he would like to propose me for the Athenæum Club. I did not really want a second club in London, but I thought it churlish

to say so, so I accepted the offer, and am now very glad that I did.

Bryce was a man of simple and frugal habits, and the contrast in style between his official tours in the West and those of Walter Long were very striking. Walter Long with six or eight motors and nearly all the rooms in the hotels engaged for his party, and police officers and R.M.s to meet him on his arrival. Bryce, pedalling along his bicycle, bent down over the handle-bars, peering out from under his shaggy eyebrows, with Spotswood-Greene of the Fishery Department toiling in the rear, vainly trying to keep up with him. I do not know how old Bryce was at the time; he must have been nearer 70 than 60, but he thought nothing of stopping on the road when passing a high mountain and lugging the wretched Spotswood-Greene up to the top of it with him. Greene was rather proud of his powers of endurance and iron physique, but Bryce wore him down to a scarecrow within a week!

On one of his tours he embarked on the Congested Districts Board steamer *Granuaile* to visit some islands on the west coast. It was blowing very hard and there was a tremendous sea on: the whole island population came off in their boats and curraghs, but the vessel was rolling so fearfully that they could not get on board, whereupon Bryce determined to address them from the ship. He got into the little perch above the bulwarks, from which the leadsman takes his soundings, and made an oration. Shot up high in the air by the rolling ship his voice could be

heard up aloft, "Men of Galway, I have come——" and then down the vessel would go crashing among the boats and burying the speaker in a smother of spray and foam—"I have come amongst you to see for myself the——" and then up he would be hustled in the air, a small figure black against the sky leaning over and shouting about what he would like to do for them, when down again he would plunge and his intentions were lost in the trough of the sea.

"I have seen queer things on this ship," said Captain Brady to me afterwards, "what with all the Chief Secretaries coming and living on board of her, she's got the name of the 'Government's Floating Gin Palace,' but a queerer thing I've never seen than this crowd of boats alongside, bashing into each other in the heavy sea and the people in them hard set to keep afloat, and this old grey fella coming down out of the sky and crashing down on them and bawling politics to them through the green seas and spray that were breaking over him till he was for all the world like a wet saygull."

Bryce was a very pleasant and easy man to work with, but he had a way of suggesting candid remarks to be added to letters to boards of guardians, which though perfectly sound, were calculated to infuriate them against the Local Government Board. For instance, a certain town council insisted upon paying a substantial sum for an illuminated address to Cardinal Vanutelli, a Papal Envoy to Ireland. This payment was not permissible under the existing law, nor had the Local Government Board any power to sanction

it. I accordingly prepared a letter to that effect and read it to Bryce, as he would have to defend the board's action. He was puffing away at a short pipe in his room in the House of Commons. He took the pipe out of his mouth and said: "You'd better wind up that letter by pointing out to them that it would be a much greater compliment to Cardinal Vanutelli if they paid it out of their own pockets." We did so, to the intense indignation of the council, who could not deny the truth of the suggestion, but would have seen the Cardinal farther before they would have put their hands into their own pockets to save the ratepayers the cost of an illuminated address for him.

I always heard that Bryce never wanted the Irish Secretaryship, and was bitterly disappointed when he was not made Secretary of State for India. I do not know whether this is true, but he certainly was never quite comfortable in the saddle at the Irish Office, and after a year he left for the post of British Ambassador in America, where he seems to have been a phenomenal success.

He was succeeded by Augustine Birrell, whose period of office was longer and infinitely more momentous and prolific in legislative reforms than that of any other Chief Secretary for Ireland.

CHAPTER XXII

AUGUSTINE BIRRELL

THROUGHOUT his whole administration Birrell was handicapped by the enormous disadvantages—the peril to credit and success in parliamentary life which faced every Chief Secretary who was supported by the Irish Party and who was entrusted by the Liberal Cabinet with a mission to govern Ireland as far as possible according to Irish ideas; for Irish ideas and British ideas will no more assimilate than water will with oil. The Chief Secretary who tried to see through green glasses and administer the laws in accordance with Irish Nationalist aspirations was inevitably regarded by a section of the English people with the same contempt and disapproval on account of his compromises as the Tory Chief Secretaries were always regarded by the Nationalist Party on account of their more drastic methods.

The price of the Nationalist support which a Liberal Chief Secretary had to pay was always high. The Nationalists had their constituents to placate, they had to give them material indications of their influence with the Government by showing that they could get things done. This, of course, was not necessary in the case of men like Redmond, Dillon, and Healy, whose weight and influence

needed no such proofs, but politically it was a matter of life and death to the rank and file of the party. If they could not defend their constituents against consequences entailed by little divergences from the law or the path of rectitude, such as misapplication of local funds, derelictions of duty, and other misdemeanours, which a friendly Chief Secretary is expected to regard as the natural vagaries of an impulsive and high-spirited race; if they could not secure little concessions of this kind for deserving constituents, of what use were they at all? They had better resign and make place for someone who could "hammer the divil" out of the Chief Secretary.

Well then, suppose the Chief Secretary recognized their difficulties and gave orders to the Local Government Board that the wind must be tempered to the shorn lamb. What was his position in the House when trying to explain why a defaulting rate collector had been given another chance, or a surcharge for the costs of a local excursion for a town council had been remitted, or why a doctor had been let off who refused to attend the sick, or a relieving officer who had not paid the relief; or why a prosecution had not been ordered for some heinous offence, or why the Local Government Board had sanctioned the appointment of an unqualified person to a post of responsibility? How could he stand over these acts in the House of Commons? Yet on the other hand, if he could not meet his supporters' wishes to a great extent in local questions, their prestige was utterly destroyed.

"Look here now, Mr. Birrell, this is a really cruel case and I'm keenly anxious about it," says a most ardent supporter of the Government; "here's a poor fellow, a most deserving character, the only support of a widowed mother and beloved by every one in the town, the kindliest creature you could meet, but the Local Government Board say if he doesn't resign the position of porter of the workhouse they'll dismiss him within a week." "What was his offence?" says the Chief Secretary. "Delirium tremens," says the man; "and the cruellest part of it all is that he has been porter of the workhouse for seven months, and it's the first time he has had delirium tremens during the whole of that time. All we ask for is justice and fair play."

Compare the position of a Liberal Chief Secretary, who must avoid the disparagement of his supporters, with the position of Tory Chief Secretaries like Long and the Balfours, who had not to consider anything except what was the right course in a particular case on its merits, irrespective of what the Irish Party or any party might think. The hostility of the Nationalists was a matter of certainty in any case, so they had no reason to trouble themselves over it. Parliament expected it and discounted it. It was not possible for the Tory politician to disarm our hostility by professing to be in sympathy with the Home Rule policy; it had to be one thing or the other. Lord Dudley tried it, and failed.

Lord Wimborne once heard the truth rather brusquely put to him at a dinner party at his

fishing lodge. He was holding forth after dinner, declaring that Ireland was the easiest country in the world to govern. "All one wanted," he said, "was a little tact, a little comprehension of the people; a tactful appreciation of their aspirations would always carry one through. Don't you agree, Mr. Hildebrand?" he asked an abrupt, straight-spoken police officer, who was no great respecter of English officials.

"Tact, sir," replied the official, "is the curse of this country. English people come over here and ruin us with their tact. Let you carry out the law and don't mind your tact and then we'll all know where we are and be happier in the knowledge!"

Morley suffered perhaps more than Birrell from the support of the Irish Party. He was ungracious and petulant with them sometimes, and felt the attacks made upon him. Birrell, on the other hand, was so humorous, so convivial, and on such good terms with the party, that he could say or do anything with them, and if they suggested something very preposterous he would shout them down without any hesitation. "What, stand up in the House and defend that!" Another line he used to take upon some Local Government proposal submitted to him which he felt was dangerous was to ask them, "What does the Local Government Board say?"

They would point out that it was because Sir Henry Robinson would probably refuse to meet their wishes that they had come to him. Birrell would then say, "Well, go to him, and put your

Mr. Birrell's Bridge at Derrada with the Maintenance Contractor

Mr. Birrell on Tour in the West

case, and let me hear what his objections are at all events, and I'll see then if anything can be done." This worked rather well, as I was often able to show them legal and other administrative obstacles to what they proposed, and thereby saved Birrell a considerable amount of trouble.

I saw a great deal of Mr. Birrell. I was rather surprised at first that he took me with him on his official tours, regardless of what Nationalist opinion might be, as I was aware that there was great jealousy over it and that he was in more than one quarter advised to beware of the Local Government Board. But I think that, in the first place, he wanted to have a sort of liaison officer for legislative work between him and the Unionists. Secondly, the experience acquired by forty years' close association with the people and my knowledge of the geography of the country were useful to him, while perhaps my motoring experiences had something to say to it, but above everything, of course, was the fact that his own ideas and intentions were too firmly held to be shaken a hair's breadth by anything I could say.

As President of the Local Government Board he was very satisfactory to work with. He was adroit and quick to come to conclusions, and although he had to allow himself to be accessible to his supporters, and to meet their wishes in a general way, I had only to show him that there was a really important question of principle to be maintained, that safety demanded a certain course, and he was adamant. He was rather easy-going, but he never kept papers and always defended

the Local Government Board in the House of Commons through thick and thin.

He was rather absent-minded at times, but his absent-mindedness on one occasion gained him the reputation of amazing perspicacity. When travelling with me in the south we reached late in the evening the Railway Hotel at Killarney, and on sitting down to dinner I perceived at the next table Mr. Fitzpatrick, one of the board's inspectors. I introduced him to his Parliamentary Chief, and Mr. Birrell was as pleasant to him as he always was to everyone "from dukes and lords to cabmen down." Next morning, before breakfast, I met a Mr. Bentley, who came and sat beside me in the lounge, and said, "I see you have got Mr. Birrell with you. I am very curious to see if he will recollect me. You remember the reception at Maynooth last year, and the awful crowd and struggle there was? People were ill and fainting from the squash, and I happened to be near Mr. and Mrs. Birrell, and made a tremendous fight for them in a very awkward crush by some ill-mannered people. Mr. Birrell was very grateful. Will he remember me now, I wonder?"

Knowing Birrell had by no means a retentive memory for faces or names I tried to soften the disappointment which I knew was inevitable by telling him that, of course, it was a year ago, and as Birrell only saw him for a few fleeting minutes it was very unlikely he would carry his memory back so far, especially as he had to meet so many hundreds of new faces. "Well, I suppose so,"

said Bentley, "but all the same, I had quite a long talk with him then, and he said he hoped we would meet again."

At this moment Birrell came down the stairs and across the hall to me, and seeing Bentley, walked over to him, shook him warmly by the hand, and after making a few remarks about things in general he marched off with me to the breakfast-room. Bentley was greatly pleased and whispered to me behind his hand as he moved off, "Wonderful, wonderful! Just fancy, only five minutes' acquaintance twelve months ago and he recognized me on the spot."

I said to Birrell over our ham and eggs, "I must say that was rather sharp of you picking up Bentley like that."

"Bentley," he replied, "who the devil is Bentley?"

"Why, that chap you rushed up to and shook hands with in the hall," I said.

"Good heavens!" said Birrell; "why, I thought he was Fitzpatrick the inspector."

A year afterwards I heard Bentley holding forth in the train on the subject of Birrell. "I haven't a word to say for his policy and all that," he said, "but there is one remarkable characteristic about him: Birrell never forgets a face!"

He was an ideal chief, and if legislative work was the criterion of a Chief Secretary's success his services would rank higher than those of any Chief Secretary except perhaps Gerald Balfour. No fewer than fifty-six important Acts of Parliament were carried through the House by him,

including the Land Act, University Act, Housing Act, and Home Rule Act.

But a Chief Secretary's reputation will always be founded to a large extent on the relative prosperity and peacefulness of the country upon his appointment and his retirement, and judged by this standard Birrell stands condemned, as he found the country prosperous and peaceful and left it in a state of armed rebellion.

The fact that the responsibility for the policy of "Trusting the people," which ended in a rebellion, was shared by the Cabinet and was started in Bryce's time (while Birrell was Minister of Education) would avail him little in the eyes of the public; nor would the fact that the new Sinn Fein movement was regarded as a pose, a dissipation, a histrionic performance, even by the Irish National Party and all those best qualified to know, be accepted as an extenuation for the failure of an administration which began with peace and ended with war. Judging by the results the Government policy failed, and the Minister who carried it out had to bear the brunt of it.

CHAPTER XXIII

PEACEFUL ADMINISTRATION

THE Sinn Fein agitation had only been set on foot about the time that Birrell came to Ireland, and no one was much disturbed by it up to the eve of the rebellion, but taking advantage of the fact that the Liberal Government were pledged not to resort to Coercion Acts and intended to rely on the ordinary law for the repression of crime, notwithstanding its proved futility in political offences, the Nationalists and Hibernians had become very active in promoting agrarian disturbances to force the sale of estates and the breaking up of grass farms. Cattle-driving and intimidation were rife, and Birrell was much blamed for not asking Parliament for special powers to deal with these offences. But to do so, to be compelled to introduce a Crimes Act, was unthinkable for the Liberal and Nationalist coalition. Birrell had, therefore, to meet the situation by doing all he could to expedite the purchase of properties. By this means, and by relying on the Malicious Injuries Act for cattle-driving, he was able to weather the storm, thanks to County Court Judge Anderson, who gave such heavy damages, involving enormous additions to local rates in the district where the drives took place, that it became quite a profitable matter

for an unpopular grazier to have his cattle driven off his land. But at one time the Press campaign and the outcry in the House of Commons for special repressive measures were so strong that it seemed very doubtful whether he could retain his position and hold out.

Mrs. Birrell accompanied him on his tours, and they both succumbed to the charm of the western scenery, and I do not think that there was any part of the country from Malin Head to Cape Clear that was not visited in connexion with the work of the Local Government Board, Congested Districts Board, and the Agricultural Department.

Walter Long told me that the two most beautiful roads in Ireland which held his memory for all time were the road from Laragh to Drumgoff in Co. Wicklow and the road which climbs the mountains at the back of Dereens in Co. Kerry.

Birrell, while agreeing about the last mentioned, put the road round Slea Head in Co. Kerry before the Wicklow road in point of beauty. But one cannot pin much faith to the value of these comparisons. The deep purple colouring of the Donegal highland, the tender blue of the Kerry ranges of mountains seen across the estuaries of Kenmare and Dingle, the bright, vivid, ever-changing colours of the Connemara Mountains with the cloud shadows racing across them, all possess their own particular charm, and who is qualified to judge between them ?

Scenery never palled on the Birrells, and I remember they were much exercised over the mentality of the chauffeur of our hired car at

Mr. Birrell at Dereens

Mr. and Mrs. Birrell at Ventry

Killarney, who, when we asked him if he admired scenery, said, very emphatically, "No." When we asked him why, he said, "Because it exasperates me." It appeared that he had every day to take out parties of tourists, and as every turn of the road disclosed some new beauty, there was always a chorus of loud "Oh's" and extravagant expressions of delight from his passengers, which coming so frequently and exactly at the same place got on his nerves to such a degree that he came to hate and loathe mountains and lakes like the very devil. Even when travelling home alone, without his passengers, the memories of these wild cries haunted him so much that the contemplation of mountain and lake filled him with savage fury. "What's the sense of roaring and bawling at a mountain or a stretch of bog?" he asked me. "Sure they aren't able to hear ye!"

There are few Irishmen, let alone Englishmen, who know every part of Ireland as well as Birrell. The farther he got away from Dublin Castle the more his spirits rose. The masterful Vice-Reine, whose intentions were of the very highest, loved power and patronage, and in her burning desire to further public health reform she wanted to direct and dominate the Local Government Board. She was so insistent upon her wishes that I think the Chief Secretary found her rather exhausting, as he realized that the legally constituted public health authority could not be subordinated to a voluntary and irresponsible Women's National Health Association. The constant friction

between the Public Health Department of the L.G. Board and the Women's National Health Association bored him extremely, and he found peace and rest among the people of the West.

I think he was happier at Recess than anywhere else. Recess at that time consisted of an hotel and a Petty Sessions Court nestling at the foot of the Lissoughter Mountain beside the Lake of Glendalough. The hotel is the residential centre for the celebrated Ballinahinch salmon fisheries, and is second to none in Ireland for its comfort and excellence. The Petty Sessions Court was established because the local magistrate happened to have an empty house there for which he had no use, and the contemplation of this sterile property left him with an ineradicable impression that what was really wanted to develop the resources and break the monotony of life in this desolate district was a Petty Sessions Court. Having persuaded the county authorities of the wisdom of this, the house was duly leased for the administration of justice, and Recess waited with steady confidence for the crimes to begin.

As a rule there was no business, but there happened to be a court sitting on the occasion of one of Mr. Birrell's visits, over a trespass case and a poteen case, and Mr. Birrell and I went in to observe the course of justice. The trespass case did not materialize. It appeared that the defendant sought out the local magistrate and explained his grievance, whereupon the magistrate declared that in his capacity of Protector of the Oppressed he would attend the court and make that black-

guard of a complainant smart. It was quite the customary thing for a complainant or defendant in a case coming up at Petty Sessions to canvass the magistrates beforehand. Often, indeed, the first question a solicitor would ask a party to legal proceedings who consulted him was: "Have ye your Bench yet?" and in the event of the answer being in the negative, he would say: "Well, be off now and get your Bench, otherwise I can do nothing for ye."

The complainant in this case, hearing of the indecent haste with which the magistrate had been captured by the defendant, played the cowardly part of informing the process server, whose house was stacked with writs for the aforesaid magistrate, that no more suitable time to serve them could be found than on the arrival of the train which would bring the magistrate from Ballinahinch to Recess Station in time for the court. The magistrate was about to alight from the train, when, perceiving the serpent with the processes lurking in the waiting-room, he stepped back into the train and went on to Galway. In his absence the defendant managed to get the case postponed, so that Nemesis did not overtake the vile complainant on this occasion.

The poteen case, however, came on. The police were prosecuting, for possession of poteen, the Widow Joyce, a garrulous female with a family of eight, all of whom had accompanied her into court. At various stages of the case she pinched the eldest boy, who "passed it on," and like an electric current the signal ran through the eight

that the time had arrived to try the effect of a dismal howl on the magistrate for the purpose of arousing his sympathy.

The police evidence was that, having suspicions of the widow, they had chosen the occasion of her being at the local shop to go to her house and say to one of the children, "Come here now, Biddy, and show us where yer mother keeps the poteen." Poor Biddy, proud of her knowledge, took the sergeant's hand and led him to a ditch by the roadside, where six bottles were found in a basket. This was the police case. One should dismiss from one's mind the dolours of poor Biddy which must have followed this lapse of foresight on her part.

The widow engaged a young solicitor, whose defence was that the police put the poteen in the ditch themselves for the sake of the reward and conducted Biddy thither.

"What hindered ye?" he said in cross-examination of the constable. "Or I'll put it this way: What was there to prevent you from putting the poteen there in that ditch yourself?"

Pressed for a definite reply to this plain question the constable blurted out, "Not a ha'porth," becoming visibly upset next instant as it flashed across him that, with the eagle eye of the Chief Secretary, patron of all magistrates and police, upon him, he should have replied with dignity, "My own conscience"; but it was too late.

"There ye are now," said the solicitor; "he let nothing prevent him from putting it there

himself"; and while the fairness or unfairness of this mode of examination was being furiously debated the magistrate finished his notes, and wiping aside the discussion announced that the Widow Joyce was guilty, and the law therefore imposed upon her a penalty of £100, which might be reduced to £6 by the Lord Lieutenant. This time the electric current was switched on, and the lost chord of the eight Joyces ascended to heaven like the sound of a great Amen.

"Fined £100," said the sergeant to the widow. "Have ye it on ye now?"

At this callous inquiry the electric siren reached the top note, while the widow beat her breast and declared that neither now nor in the past nor in the future, nor in heaven nor in hell, would she be able to find 100 pence, much less £100.

The absconding magistrate referred to in the trespass case was a most delightful character. He had a splendid business with the small farmers, but he was too generous with his credit in distressful times; he made so many bad debts that he could not punctually pay the merchants' claims upon him, and he was often in severe financial straits. He spoke with great candour of the many incidental advantages of holding a commission of the peace, and the following story to illustrate this he told me without the least suspicion that his part in the transaction displayed anything but wonderful acumen. I give the story in his own words:

"Well, Edward Reeves was going to get married, and Lady Eleanor Waller—do you know Lady

Eleanor? Ye don't?—Well, she'd walk on her head for my daughters, she often has them stopping with her. Well, she wrote to me to send her a dozen lobsters, 'for the love of God,' for the wedding breakfast. I was greatly put out and I didn't know where I could lay my hands on any lobsters just then, and I was hard set to know what I'd do to get them for her, when a b——y ruffian from Corraun came up to me and said, 'Mr. O'Donnell, will ye be back at the Petty Sessions next Thursday, as I'm up for an assault case?' I asked him about it and he said that he'd only given the schoolmaster a bit of a clout. 'Well, now, look here, my man,' says I; 'do ye know where ye can get any lobsters?' 'Troth and I don't,' says he. 'Troth and it's better for ye to think,' says I; 'for mind ye an assault is a very serious thing, and ye might get six months for the like o' that.' 'Well, I don't know where I could lay my hands on lobsters,' says he; 'and there's no good me saying I do.' 'Well, be off out of this,' says I; 'and may God in his mercy help you when it comes to the Petty Sessions. But don't be blathering about no lobsters. Sure there's plenty of them in it. Isn't it a quare thing if there's no lobsters in the place that the priest is able to have them moored out in the tide in a basket forninst his door, with the boat handy there where he can shove off and pick out a couple of them any time he wants them?' Well, I let that sink in and he went off but said nothing.

"Next Thursday I drove into the yard of the court-house, and was taking the horse out of the

car, when this blackguard, this infernal ruffian, this Thief of the World, came up to me and whispered, 'Mr. O'Donnell, I have the lobsters inside. What'll I do with them?' I told him to put them in the well of the car. I gave him a half a sovereign for the lobsters, and asked him where did he get them. Well, he said he got a half a dozen of them below in Ardmore, but damned a bit would he tell me where he got the other half dozen, and didn't I know right well that the villain had poached them out of the priest's basket?

"Well, the case came on and there were two of them in the assault, and it was a wicked affair, and I fined the other fellow a half a crown, but I fined this boyo the ten bob I gave him for the lobsters, and I wish ye'd seen the look he gave me when he went out of the court! The R.M. said to me afterwards, 'I didn't want to differ with ye, Mr. O'Donnell, you knowing the men and all that, but I thought the fellow ye fined two-and-six was the worst of the two.' 'Och, well,' says I; 'ye can't have blackguards going about the country stealing lobsters.' 'Well,' says the R.M., 'I think that's what I call a wholly irrelevant remark!'"

CHAPTER XXIV

OLD AGE PENSIONS; THE POOR LAW COMMISSION

MR. BIRRELL was spared the infliction of the perennial famines, which were so great a source of embarrassment to most of his predecessors, as the old age pensions payable to the occupiers of small-holdings, who hitherto had been dependent on their land, removed for ever the menace of destitution arising from the failure of the staple food of the country. The pensions meant a great deal more to these western people than to the wage-earners in towns. The thousands of small-holders, who in the past had to be maintained in bad years by extraneous relief in some shape or form, were people who scarcely knew the colour of money; they had no earnings, and they lived for the greater part of the year on credit from the shopkeepers, who were well aware of the assets of every household. When a calf or a pig was driven to the fair, the proceeds of the sale had to go straight to the shopkeeper for the reduction of the debt. In the same way, the few pounds sent home by the son or daughter in America were absorbed in liquidation of the bill for the year's groceries, so that although these people had their potatoes and their tea and their bread, money was a thing they never handled, and it was only in a very few cabins

that there were a few prized shillings carefully hidden away in a stocking for emergencies.

And then like manna from heaven came the old age pension and the steady flow of silver into their homes. More money came in a month than the family had seen for many years, and more kept coming in each Friday with the regularity of the rising sun. It was incredible, and the sudden and amazing deference paid to the old people by their relations and the shopkeepers and others, who had hitherto shown them no consideration whatever, was scarcely to be believed. To an old couple passing down the village to be hailed in a friendly way from the shopkeepers standing at the door and to be asked to come inside for a while was the millennium. For a long time the people in Connemara attributed the pensions to the influence of the King, who since his visit had interested himself in them, and they could not bring themselves to believe that the pensions would last. "You might believe," they would say, "fifty or sixty of the old people might get the money maybe for a year, but for the whole of the old people to be getting the money for the rest of their lives—arrah, what nonsense! Sure where would it come from?"

At first those who were placed on the pensions list were desperately afraid of strangers outside their own families getting on. "Sure the money wouldn't go round," they would say, and they were quite ready to whisper confidentially to the pensions officer that the claimants were their juniors by some years.

The difficulty of proving age in Ireland was very great. There was no registry of births until 1864, and the committee sitting in the Treasury under Sir John A. Kempe to consider the carrying of the Act into operation were much exercised as to what could be done in the circumstances. I pointed out to the committee that the people did not really know their exact ages and that every old man or woman of any age over sixty would claim the pension, and would regard the age limit as a mere irritating restriction, and that some method must be devised to prevent imposition. Mr. J. P. Crowley, a native of Cork and a Treasury official, who was on the committee, accused me of casting aspersions on my countrymen, and asked me indignantly if I meant to convey that an Irishman would tell a lie for the sake of five shillings. I told him that I thought that plenty of them would, and Englishmen and Scotsmen too, but whereas they had a registry of births in England and Scotland, we had none in Ireland, and some check was absolutely necessary.

It was then decided that the census returns should be accepted as evidence, and failing this, Mr. Crowley persuaded the committee that a clergyman's certificate of a claimant's age should be deemed sufficient evidence. I thought this very hard on the clergy, as they would be subjected to intense annoyance if they kept an old person from the pension by refusing a certificate, irrespective of what his age might be. However, Mr. J. P. Crowley prevailed, and the clergy were beset with applications by persons to whose age

they had not the slightest clue. They got over it by giving vague certificates to the effect that they *believed* the claimant must be seventy years of age, and the result of this loose method of awarding pensions was that the proportion of septuagenarians to the population in Ireland was far and away beyond that of England and Scotland. Eventually this regulation was repealed, these certificated cases were revised, and the pensions were reduced to something like intelligible numbers.

The difficulty about computing means was considerable. No one could get a pension whose means exceeded £21 10s. per annum, and although this was easily calculated where a man had visible property, in the case of a working man it was very difficult. I remember an instance in Arklow where a fisherman was known to make a lot of money, far more than £21 10s. a year, by supplying the townspeople with fish. He applied for a pension and it was refused, and he then appealed to the Local Government Board. It was true, he admitted, that he had made a lot of money by fishing, but he was old now, and fishing was a hazardous occupation for a man of his age, and he really thought that after a life of peril, during which he had supported himself by his own independent exertions, he might be allowed to give up the sea altogether. We agreed, and awarded him a five-shilling pension.

All went well with him until one day the pension officer, returning home, found him in the act of selling to his wife a fine turbot from a very large basket of fish. Was this one day's catch? the

pension officer asked. The pensioner proudly replied that it was, and that it was nothing to some of his hauls lately. The pension officer then "Raised a Question" that the pensioner's means had now exceeded £21 10s., and it came before us again. The pensioner said that it was true that he had been catching fish, but that for the future he would only catch fish up to the value of £21 10s., and that after he had caught fish to the value of that sum the whole of the rest of his catch should be thrown back into the sea. For the remainder of the year he would shun the perils of the deep and live the life of ease and security to which a septuagenarian was entitled by the law of the land.

I have written in some of the earlier pages of this book of the businesslike and efficient administration by northern governing bodies, and of the determination of the Ulster man to get value for his money. Mr. Birrell had one experience of this which it is worth while to record.

Birrell, on account of his Home Rule policy, was anathema to the Ulster members of Parliament and also to the Orangemen in Belfast. He had said some things, too, about their religious quarrels which galled them; something about there being as much real religion in their differences as in two billiard balls knocking together. He therefore did not visit Belfast very often, as he felt he would not be very welcome there. However, upon one occasion in 1915 he paid an official visit to the Lord Mayor.

The Belfast Corporation had appointed a com-

mittee to distribute the Prince of Wales's Fund, and Mr. Devlin sent Birrell a complaint from some of his supporters to the effect that the Protestants were getting all the money they wanted, while the Catholics were refused, although they were in greater need. A list of persons alleged to have been refused because of their religion was given.

The case against the Corporation looked very black as presented, and I persuaded Birrell to come down with me and investigate it for himself.

He didn't much like the rôle of Daniel in the Lion's Den, but I assured him that however they might dislike his policy the Corporation would show him the respect due to a Minister of the British Parliament, and he finally consented to go.

The committee of the Fund met us, and James Stirling, manager of the York Street Linen Mills, who was honorary secretary of the Fund, produced his papers and had so full and complete a report upon the circumstances of every case that Birrell was unable to find a single instance of which it could be said that there had been a questionable exercise of discretion by the committee. He was entirely at a loss to understand how the manager of a great business like the York Street Mills, working day and night, turning out miles and miles of aeroplane linen, could bother himself with a troublesome voluntary job like this.

"Well," said Stirling, "my company gave a pretty large subscription to this fund, so we thought it just as well to see that the money was properly applied."

This reply, so thoroughly characteristic of the business principles which have made Ulster trade what it is, made a great impression on Birrell, and as the Lord Mayor gave a luncheon party to which prominent citizens were invited to meet the Chief Secretary, he left the city with rather a different idea of the manners and methods prevailing in Belfast than he had held when entering it.

For the first three years of Birrell's administration I had more work to do with him in London than in Ireland, as I was a member of the Royal Commission on Poor Laws which sat from 1905 to 1909, and during those years I had to be in London nearly every fortnight attending the sittings of the commission.

The commission was a strong one, and so far as English interests were concerned it was thoroughly representative. I had little knowledge of English conditions, and the object of my regular attendance and that of my Irish colleague, the Bishop of Ross, was chiefly to understand the principles of the reforms for England approved by our colleagues, and to make sure that they should be adapted to Ireland only so far as they were suitable to the requirements of that country. Lord George Hamilton was a wonderful chairman and kept the various sections of the commission working together amicably with consummate tact.

He had no previous experience of Poor Law administration and therefore undertook the stupendous task before him with a perfectly open mind, free from prejudices or preconceived ideas of any kind. The rapidity with which he mastered the

principles of the Poor Law system was almost incredible. I thought that Mrs. Bosanquet, a quiet, delicate woman, who spoke very little, possessed the best-balanced mind of the whole lot of us, and Lord George Hamilton probably thought the same, for the preparation of the first draft of the Majority Report for submission to the commission was, I believe, nearly altogether the work of these two. Mrs. Sidney Webb led the Socialist Party and was, I imagine, responsible for the conception and drafting of the Minority Report. She was the most deft cross-examiner I ever listened to. She was so sure of her facts, and she had a way of leading the witness on by seeming to be in complete agreement and full of admiration for his theories, and then, by subtle deduction from his statement, she would bring him round to a bewildered acceptance of her own views and bind him down hand and foot to them, utterly unable to disentangle himself, although he realized that they were quite contrary to his own convictions.

The only time I ever saw her floored was by an obstinate old Yorkshire farmer, a chairman of Poor Law guardians, who was convinced that any opinions he held must be infallible, and that anyone who differed from him was sincerely to be pitied. Mrs. Webb proceeded to draw him upon the principles on which he gave outdoor relief.

"We do it this way," he said. "If a man's a drunken chap, say, we'd only give him maybe half a crown, but if he was a decent fellow, a thrifty

sort of chap, why then we'd give him more, say three-and-six. Oh, yes, we discriminate right enough, we do that."

Mrs. Webb was on to him like a shot. "Oh, of course, Mr. Hodge—most reasonable; I quite understand. And following out your principle, if he was a *very* thrifty chap and had money in the bank, I suppose you'd give him five shillings?"

"Haw, haw, haw!" roared Mr. Hodge. "Eh, but that's good. Money in the bank. Five shillings. Oh these ladies, these ladies!" And he shook his fat sides with laughter, winking at the other members of the commission, and kept leaning over the table and explaining to them. "She'd give them five shillings with money in the bank, she would." Then, when he managed to bottle down his laughter, he turned round to Mrs. Webb: "Now do go on, Miss; I'm a-listening to you." But Mrs. Webb was so disconcerted at this method of meeting her logic that she blushed and dried up, and left the old fellow shaking his head from side to side with laughter and ejaculating, "Oh the ladies, the ladies!" and then confidentially to Lord George as he left the witness chair, "I expect you has a heap of fun from them, my Lord."

I remember one other case where one of our examiners was laid low by a gentle little school teacher, who appeared as a witness from a public educational institution. This member of the commission had a strong conviction that children were kept too much in a groove and were never allowed to think for themselves, were pitchforked into

professions and trades when they arrived at the age of fourteen or so without due consideration of what their own wishes for the future might be. Every witness representing the teaching staff who came before us was always pressed very strongly on this point of educating the boys and girls for the calling they really desired. The witness had handed in a list of the boys sent out during the last three years to the various trades, and when the examination came round to the member of the commission referred to, he took his usual line.

"Of course you allow these boys to have a say in selecting their future?"

"Oh, no," said the little lady. "That would never do."

"Never do?" said the surprised examiner. "Why would it never do? If a boy hankers for a certain occupation in life, surely it should be found for him. What is the sense of apprenticing a boy to a hairdresser, for example, if he wants to be an engineer?"

"We give them to whatever we think they are suited for, which is far better than letting them choose for themselves," replied the little lady.

"Well, why not try them?" said the examiner.

"Well, we do sometimes," she replied. "Last night, for instance, knowing that I was to be examined to-day, I took the senior class and asked the boys what professions or callings they would desire to follow when they left school. There were twenty-four in the class. Two of them wished to be pastrycooks, three wished

to be tobacconists, four wished to be engine-drivers, and the rest of them without any exception wanted to be pirates, and were convinced that no other occupation was worth a moment's thought. The truth is that the boys nearly always want to follow in the footsteps of the hero of the last story-book they have read."

The commission did not spend much time over Irish evidence. I think they found it hard to understand the mentality of the Irish witnesses and their way of expressing themselves. Certainly some of the persons locally deputed to attend and give evidence were chosen more on account of their willingness to take advantage of the opportunity of a free trip to London than of any special study or knowledge on their part of the needs and weaknesses of Poor Law administration.

There was one very jolly old witness from the South. I forget his name for the moment, he was a horsedealer by trade, with the richest southern brogue, who had come over to enjoy himself and incidentally to give his opinion on any subject under the sun he might be asked about. He had a long paper of notes full of information on various subjects, probably extracted in part from "Enquire Within" or *Tit-Bits*, and I remember coming in rather late to the afternoon sitting and finding a most bewildered company of members endeavouring to follow him, and the chairman vainly trying to pin him down to the subject of Poor Law reform.

The first words I heard were: "Well, then, I'll

dhrop that, and I'll come to another subject. Smokeless powdher. Ay, smokeless powdher. Now, the great p'int about this is——" Here the chairman interposed: "Yes, I quite understand it is, as you say, in itself a most interesting thing, but I'm afraid I must really rule it as outside the scope of our reference. I'm afraid we cannot connect it with Poor Law reform." "I'm coming to that," said the witness, with a wave of his hand; but he had evidently forgotten the connexion, for, after studying his notes carefully, he burst out with: "Oh, ay, Poor Law—now, this is very important: Illegitimate childher"—and then, glancing round the table and lowering his voice decorously, he continued: "Now with all respect to the ladies present, them illegitimate childher is a very great mistake!"

I knew perfectly well the point he wanted to get out about these children's wards in workhouses, but the English and Scotch members did not, and the witness was a little bothered; the lunch had been satisfying, the day was hot, and his words conveyed the impression either of an appeal to the lady members present to refrain in future from embarking on these responsibilities, or else of a desire on his part to avoid raking up painful episodes in their past (if any) which had best been forgotten.

After hearing a few Irish witnesses the commission came to the conclusion that they would understand the Irish part of the problem better by a study of the subject on the spot, so they divided into three sections, which made a hurried

scamper through the country seeing workhouses. They held one sitting at the Custom House, and left the drafting of the report to the Bishop of Ross and myself. They agreed to it paragraph by paragraph with very little amendment. The work was practically finished in 1908, and after that time I was able to devote more attention to Irish administration.

CHAPTER XXV

LORD AND LADY ABERDEEN

SIR ANTHONY MACDONNELL did not find a congenial spirit in Birrell, and he retired with a peerage. The worst thing attributed to his influence with an Irish Government was the repeal of the Arms Act. This enabled the people to keep firearms, and is supposed by many to be the *fons et origo* of the troubles which ended in rebellion. He was replaced by the Assistant Under-Secretary, Sir James Dougherty, who had been dragged out of the obscurity of the Presbyterian ministry by Morley in 1895, to everyone's intense surprise, to fill the vacancy created by the retirement of Sir William Kaye. Owing to his lack of administrative experience and to his helplessness when he was dumped into the Civil Service and had to attune his principles to the change from the service of God to that of Dublin Castle, he had occupied the position, a silent and comparatively unknown figure, with little influence with the Government of the day. But he was a quiet, patient man, inimical to none, and his chance came when Macdonnell fell ill and he had perforce to act as Under-Secretary during the whole of Walter Long's administration. It was rather a trying time for him, as he was credited with extreme Nationalist sym-

pathies, and partly from this, and partly from his lack of knowledge of the working of Irish public departments, Walter Long did not take him deeply into his counsels. He had done the work nominally for nine months, and although he must have been about sixty when Macdonnell retired, Birrell could not very well have passed him over, even if he had wanted to, and he was duly appointed. But he was a tired man at the time, and was lucky enough to reach the limit of his services before the Sinn Fein agitation became really dangerous.

Irish affairs ran quietly and uneventfully during the greater part of Dougherty's term of office. The people never, I think, realized the strength and determination of the Sinn Fein leaders, and looked upon their demonstrations much as they would have looked upon cinema actors masquerading in public places, and thought them a fine, brave spectacle, without having the least idea of how soon they were to be roped into the movement and unable to disentangle themselves from its fatal bonds.

The only serious trouble Dougherty had to deal with was the Ulster gun-running demonstration and the landing of arms at Howth, which led to the dismissal of William V. Harrel from the post of Assistant Commissioner of the Dublin Police. Harrel had acted to the best of his judgment and discretion upon a difficult and critical occasion, but he was sacrificed to popular clamour in circumstances which shook the confidence of the R.I.C. in the Government to its very foundations, and which had far-reaching results. The police,

perceiving that the Government was dominated by the Nationalist and Labour parties, and that they could not be sure of its support in emergencies and would be made scapegoats, completely lost heart, and every officer of the force realized that if he got into conflict with political movements he imperilled his position; so with this feeling of nervousness and insecurity prevailing in the police force, the Sinn Fein movement was nourished and took firm root, and they continued their operations under the eyes of the police.

The King and Queen visited Ireland again during Lord Aberdeen's Viceroyalty, on the occasion of the Irish International Exhibition, but the atmosphere of Dublin Castle at the time was rather overcast by the affair of the Crown jewels, and the visit was hardly as auspicious and successful as that of 1903. The Crown jewels included the star and insignia of the Order of St. Patrick, almost priceless old Brazilian diamonds, and these had been taken out of the safe by Sir Arthur Vicars, Ulster King at Arms, to be furbished up preparatory to His Majesty's visit. Vicars remembered putting them back at the end of the day, but in the morning it was found that they had mysteriously disappeared, and from that day to this they have never been heard of. Vicars was a notoriously forgetful, casual sort of creature, nearly always late for his engagements; but however absent-minded a man might be, he would scarcely be likely to leave many thousand pounds' worth of diamonds on his table, and go home under the impression that he had locked them up in a

safe. His recollection of putting them securely away was so distinct and circumstantial that one must assume that they were locked up, to be taken by someone who had access to the key at some time or other and had taken a mould of it. The King was very angry, and it was no use for Ministers and officials to try and raise his hopes by clues and theories. I know of one who did, and His Majesty's remark was: "I don't want theories, I want my jewels!"

Rumours of the wildest and most absurd kind were flying about, all equally vain and futile. I will give just one sample, which will serve as well as any of them. The possessor of this particular clue was a Dublin jarvey who drove a friend of mine to Harcourt Street Station about a fortnight after the theft.

"The jules, is it?" he said. "Well! well! And d'ye say ye never heard tell what way they were took? My! Oh my! Whisht now and I'll give ye the word in private, and there's not many in Dublin has it besides meself, but I have it for a fact from a chap in the D Division that's a cousin of me a'nt. Whisper now! Sure it was the King himself took them! He was afther having great card-playin' with the Duke of Devonshire, and he dhropped a power o' money, so he sent round Lord Aberdeen wan night to take them out of the safe and bring them to him and say nothin' at all about it. Sure they were his own, and hadn't he as good a right to take them as he would have to sell his own gould watch and chain? Well, now, what I'm tellin' ye is a fact, and believe me ye'll never hear tell of them jules again."

CHAPTER XXVI

THE CALM BEFORE THE STORM

SIR MATTHEW NATHAN, who succeeded Dougherty as Under-Secretary, was a hard worker, and we were all much at a loss to know what business he could find to keep him at his office every day from half-past nine until seven p.m., as his predecessors had been able to get through the work in a few hours. He viewed Irish departments and Irish officials with a fine Semitic scorn, but yet with a kind of patient tolerance which was rather amusing to contemplate when one realized how little he knew of the country. He had rather an embarrassing way, after he had had an interview with any official, of committing to writing a full statement of his recollection of everything that had passed, and at subsequent interviews this statement would be produced from a pigeon-hole and used to refute some point under discussion. His written statements were often so surprising that I also used invariably to put down my recollection of what had transpired, so as to be ready for him if he produced any embarrassing paraphrase of our conversations.

I do not think he took any of the heads of the Irish departments much into his confidence, although he was quite pleasant to them. He relied to a great extent upon the advice of John Dillon, whose vast experience and parliamentary knowledge was second

to none in Ireland and was freely given. But Dillon had always kept himself aloof from local squabbles, and absolutely refused to influence himself over patronage, besides being rather out of touch with his constituents and with what was going on. His knowledge and interest in current problems all over the world lifted him so much over the heads of the rank and file of his party that he evidently did not realize at the time the depth of the new Sinn Fein movement. Nathan, following the same line, merely regarded Sinn Fein as a froth on the surface of Irish Nationalism.

The Aberdeens were an earnest, kindly, well-intentioned couple; but like many people who come over to Ireland imbued with a desire to show their appreciation and sympathy with Irish Nationalism, they were more Irish than the Irish themselves, a condition of mind which, when displayed by English people, generally amuses rather than impresses the Irish Nationalist. The Aberdeens sincerely believed in the policy of self-government for Ireland, and spared no efforts in working for it, taking into their counsels chiefly whose who saw, or pretended to see, eye to eye with them in the matter. In order to illustrate and to establish for ever the growth of the Irish spirit within them, upon retirement they were said to have at first desired for the title conferred on them the most ancient historical name in Ireland, hallowed by events and memories of those who had fought and ruled and loved and made our country, the Hill of Tara. They evidently expected that the announcement of their future designation as the Marquess and

Marchioness of Tara after their ten years' services to Irish Nationalism would relieve the Irish from any feeling they might have owing to the ancient glories of Tara becoming annexed as the heritage of Scotland.

While the Irish Nationalists were appreciative of the Aberdeens' work, the want of a sense of proportion about this proposal fairly took their breath away, and it was conveyed to the Aberdeens that this would not do. They then chose the title of Temair, which meant something in Irish history or language which few people understood ; indeed, one man, who should have known better, told me that he supposed the title of Temair had been taken because Lady Aberdeen was such a good fighter and generally carried her way in everything. I did not know what he meant at the time, but subsequently discovered that in the back of his subconscious mind was Turner's picture of "The Fighting *Téméraire*," and that he had confused the names and thought that Lady Aberdeen had seen in the title chosen the emblem of her fight for the improvement of the national health.

Lady Aberdeen's work, through her Women's National Health Association, for maternity and child welfare, covered a very wide field. The only public health scheme which rather frightened the people was the travelling caravan with its lecturers on the prevention and cure of disease. The caravan was supposed to have had, for demonstration purposes, slides and cultures of various bacilli, and the country people much objected to the importation into their districts for any purpose

of these things, dead or alive. They were convinced that it was dangerous, as " some of them microbes might escape " and go joy-riding on the night breezes and " attacking quiet people when it was too dark to see them and get out of their way." All her other schemes for milk supply, babies' clubs, maternity benefit and children's welfare, generally were excellent. But she had too many irons in the fire and attempted too much, and in her desire for power, influence and patronage she interfered with public departments in matters for which she had no responsibility, and in a manner which led to much unpleasantness.

She was surrounded with advisers who gave way to her in everything, and never liked the risk of offending her by warning her of financial and administrative dangers in her schemes. Those who did not yield at once to her proposals were taboo, and I was unfortunate enough to be one of these, and had constant disputes with her; but they never blinded me to the fact of her meritorious efforts for the public health reform, and I never ceased to regret that she was not better advised.

The beginning of all my trouble with her was over Local Government Board appointments. We had two vacancies for medical inspectors, the appointments of which were made by the Local Government Board; the Lord Lieutenant had no responsibility for them, and no other Lord Lieutenant had ever interfered in such cases. I had discussed the appointments with Mr. Birrell, and we selected four applicants as possessing the qualifications we required, and Birrell left the final

selection to me. I had not the least idea the Aberdeens were interested in the matter till I was just about to sign the warrants, when I received an urgent summons to attend at the Lodge to see Lord Aberdeen. He referred to the vacant posts, and said that Lady Aberdeen had great experience in public health matters and considered Drs. A and B as the most suitable persons to fill the vacancies, and desired that they should be appointed at once. While he was speaking, Lady Aberdeen was walking up and down the garden outside the windows with Sir William Thomson, awaiting my reply. I said that Dr. A had no hospital experience, and that Dr. B was very bad tempered, and that the board preferred Drs. C and D, who possessed the exact qualifications they required. Lord Aberdeen went out to the garden to see Lady Aberdeen and came back very much upset, and said that Lady Aberdeen was still convinced that Drs. A and B were the most suitable, and regretted to differ from me. I then asked if she knew Drs. C and D and was informed that she did not; whereupon I pointed out that she was not therefore in a position to decide that Drs. A and B were more suitable. I also explained that the appointments were made by the Local Government Board, and that the Lord Lieutenant had no functions in the matter. Lord Aberdeen then said he would telegraph to Birrell. Shortly after I got back to the office, a mounted orderly came with a message from Lady Aberdeen withdrawing Dr. B and substituting Dr. X. I heard nothing from Birrell on the subject, and on the following day appointed Drs. C and D.

I wrote to Lady Aberdeen explaining why I was compelled to take this course, but she made no reply, and from this time forth the Aberdeens' dislike and mistrust of me became, I am informed, a perfect obsession with them. Soon afterwards Lord Aberdeen conveyed to Mr. Birrell that the time had come when my long and valuable services might be fittingly rewarded by the governorship of some distant island. But Birrell evidently did not want the bother of finding a successor to me at the Local Government Board, and never told me about it till long afterwards. Otherwise if the island had not been too remote, I should have rather liked the idea.

Indeed, if I could have foreseen the humiliations and irreparable losses to which I should have to submit when the British Government withdrew the protection of the military and police from the law-abiding Irish people and left them at the mercy of the bloodthirsty Irregulars, I would gladly have faced exile to any quiet part of the earth where there was settled government.

The Aberdeens were so familiar a sight in the streets that their presence never attracted much attention, and I think on their final departure there was some mistake about the hour; they either left earlier or later than the time announced in the papers, as there was no crowd in the streets and no demonstration whatever, if we except the old apple-woman in Nassau Street, who was heard to wail out a farewell cry: "There they go. There they go, with their microbes and Crown jules an' all!"

CHAPTER XXVII

GROWTH OF SINN FEIN

BIRRELL was much exercised about a suitable successor to the Aberdeens, and told me that he wished he could find some Irish peer with an historic name to submit to the Prime Minister; someone who had lived on his Irish estates and had not taken any strong line in politics, who was not inimical to the people, and who would be willing to help the Government so far as in him lay to make the best they could out of the Home Rule Bill when it was launched off the ways.

I told him that the only man I could think of at the moment who answered to the description seemed to be Lord Powerscourt, the H.M.L. for Wicklow, and Birrell's statement of the needed qualifications seemed to fit Powerscourt like a glove. Birrell jumped at the idea and said that he always thought that Powerscourt was a picturesque figure in Irish life, and asked me to find him at once and draw him discreetly, without pledging Birrell to anything. I found Powerscourt at the Kildare Street Club, and put it to him. He promised to think over it, to consult Lady Powerscourt, and to let me know his views by that evening's post. I got his letter next morning. He said times were bad and looked very threatening for Irish landlords; he had not yet sold his estate, and he feared the

expense of the Viceroyalty would be more than he could afford. Moreover, he felt that he must consider himself booked for the war, and after full consideration that I must tell Birrell that it would be no use in sending his name forward.

Lord Wimborne, who was selected for the post, had been on a commission while Lord Ashby St. Legers, and had shown very strong Nationalist views, and it was thought that his appointment would probably be popular.

Lord Wimborne was an impetuous man with an active mind, and he much resented the fact that as Viceroy he had no real power but to give effect to the policy of the Government as laid down by the Chief Secretary. He fought his point with Sir Matthew Nathan, but the latter convinced him that this was the relative constitutional position of him and the Chief Secretary. Wimborne was clever, a good sportsman, and popular as any man must have been who brought so incomparable a Vice-Reine to fill a niche in Irish history as Lady Wimborne. He was, however, rather too outspoken, and probably did not realize that the Viceroy's dinner-table utterances were quickly circulated and became common property. His very gloomy forebodings as to the ultimate end of the war became current and caused a good deal of depression, especially at the time when things were in a very critical position. Not that Ireland suffered as much as England from the war; being a purely agricultural country, the farmers, great and small, made unheard-of profits. The Kerry peasants, for example, regarded the war as the inter-

vention of a divine Providence solely to compensate them for the loss sustained by the orders of the Agricultural Board, which for some reason or other prohibited the removal of their cattle.

Nor were the people troubled much by any restrictions on their food supply, as, outside Dublin, these were observed in a very casual manner. I remember seeing in Derry a little framed menu which always hung on the porch outside one of the hotels, giving the day's dinner. On this was the announcement, in large capitals, that it was a "Meatless Day," but following this, under the head of "Fish," there appeared "Boiled Mutton, Caper Sauce," and under "Joint" there was a blank, so as to convey to all and sundry that, notwithstanding the piscatory boiled mutton, the management realized its obligations in regard to the meatless day. Outside the hotel, lazily basking in the sun, a policeman was leaning against the porch which bore the announcement conveying to the diners this legend of meatless mutton.

At Enniskillen one of our inspectors informed me that he was at the hotel when a number of officers arrived by train and sat down to lunch. After being apprised that it was a meatless day, they were surprised to learn that they could have cold lamb, mint sauce and salad. The waiter explained that nothing was regarded as meat in that hotel which was cooked before midnight on the previous evening. This lamb had been cooked for last night's dinner, and had therefore ceased to be meat after the clock had tolled the hour of midnight.

The Sinn Fein movement undoubtedly gained much strength in numbers by the fear of conscription. The farmers and labourers hated the idea of being dragged away from their homes to a foreign country to fight for England. John Redmond's assurance to the House, that in the face of the common peril England and Ireland forgot their ancient differences and were allies at last, was repudiated with anger by the Sinn Fein leaders and by the people, who realized that if that view of Ireland's obligation were accepted they would be let in for a share of the burthen of the war. The Sinn Fein aspect of the matter spread to all parts of the country, and those who from fear shrank from taking their part, thought it easier to oppose the recruiting associations by sheltering themselves behind Sinn Fein principles than by giving other excuses why they could not go. Moreover, the recruiting in Ireland was rather badly handled. The war pictures, cinemas and posters were simply terrifying. What inducement would an ignorant young labourer see in the contemplation of a picture of a wounded soldier left alone on the battlefield, binding up his leg, while the blood-red sunset threw a ghastly light over the scene?

Then there were the war cinemas of barrage fire; the big shells exploding in the midst of a lot of troops going "over the top," though interesting enough, were not the kind of thing calculated to encourage young men to leave their peaceful and comfortable homes. The posters, too, were tactless. For instance, "You are wanted to bring

criminals to justice!" was one very extensively circulated. But the Irish consider that bringing criminals to justice is the business of the police, and that an outsider who takes a hand in this game is no better than an informer, who is supposed to be in the lowest grade of human beings. If proper, attractive posters had been used it might have made a considerable difference. For example, if the picture of the Irish Guards in France, instead of showing a lot of careworn men seen through fire and smoke, had portrayed a number of laughing young soldiers sitting outside a café with girls on their knees and brimming goblets of porter on the table beside them, the picture might have attracted. But in any case, however well the recruiting had been managed, it would never have blinded the people to the meaning of the casualty lists, and the bulk of them found sanctuary in the avowal of Sinn Fein principles.

Nathan began to be very uneasy at the information reaching him of the growing strength of Sinn Fein, and he had every reason to be. Just before the rebellion the Sinn Feiners were openly drilling and marching with dummy guns all over the place. I remember driving home one day and finding a whole army encamped on the Donnybrook road, and having to go round by a circuitous route. They also had a rehearsal of an attack on Dublin Castle, with the police looking on. Some time before the rebellion, when Nathan was seriously upset by the news coming in, he asked me to send a private note to all the inspectors asking whether they had any information as to

the seriousness or otherwise of this menace. The inspectors, while reporting the numerical strength of the movement, did not attach much gravity to it, as they said it was highly improbable that the Sinn Feiners would take on the British Army, and even if they did, they would be knocked out within a week. I think, in justice to Nathan, it may be said that although people were exasperated at the boldness and audacity of the Sinn Fein army, the general opinion was much the same as that expressed by the inspectors. On the other hand, Nathan had more information about what was actually going on than other people had, as Neville Chamberlain, the R.I.C. chief, did not disguise his very strong personal opinion that things were very serious indeed.

I have felt sorely tempted to lay down my pen and let my reminiscences end here.

The years under review have been happy years to have lived through and to write of, but I am afraid that the rest of my experiences of the English in Ireland and their final surrender will be dismal reading, especially for those who have been through it and know the worth of Lloyd George's plea that the withdrawal from Ireland stands out as a noble act of statesmanship which has brought peace and good will upon earth after a hundred years of strife. However, it would hardly do to break off my narrative at the commencement of the most momentous years of all, so, painful as it is to me, I must push on with as good a grace as possible.

CHAPTER XXVIII

EASTER, 1916

WITH this atmosphere of unrest and sinister rumours, with vast numbers of people drilling and marching through the country, Easter of 1916 came upon us. The people scattered to the holiday resorts or came to Dublin to enjoy themselves at the race meetings, though at the same time they were full of stories of the audacity of the Sinn Feiners, and their open preparations for a rising, and full of indignation at the supineness of Dublin Castle in allowing these demonstrations of force to take place and doing nothing to assert itself, nothing to put down this foolish but dangerous pretence at establishing an Irish Republic. "Humiliating," they said it was, "for if the Government were in earnest and worth its salt, the whole movement would crumple up and could be extinguished within a week. It was a ridiculous but dangerous masquerade"; but at the same time, outside the Sinn Feiners themselves, I do not think that there was a living soul in Ireland who was prepared for what was to follow in two days' time.

Mr. Birrell had arranged to visit North Mayo that Easter, and I had journeyed to Mallaranny to await his joining me on Tuesday. The hotel was full of Easter holiday-makers, and most of

them had to return to Dublin on Tuesday by the 7 a.m. train or by the Limited Mail at 12.40. To everyone's surprise no night mail had come through, and hence there was no morning train to return. The manageress of the hotel could only inform her guests in blank dismay that all communication with Dublin was cut off, by wire, by post, and by rail, and that the station-master could not say when there would be trains up or down, and that the food supply for the hotel had not arrived. She could throw no light whatever upon the business, and the guests were in despair. Many of them had important engagements in Dublin, and one man, I remember, a bank manager, kept impressing upon everybody that, whatever happened, he must get back, as he had a meeting of his directors next morning, and that this sort of thing could not be endured. Some of the people tried to hire cars, but no petrol was obtainable. A supply would have come down by the train if it had arrived, but there was not a pint to be had in the village. Even then no one would credit the idea of a rebellion: the prevailing impression was that a railway bridge had been broken or blown up by the Sinn Feiners, "who really ought to be put down"; and it was quite late in the evening when a vague rumour reached the hotel of a rising in Dublin. Although nobody credited it, great uneasiness prevailed. The bank manager, however, insisted that the fact, if confirmed, made it all the more urgent that no obstacles should be put in the way of his proceeding *at once* to Dublin.

I had a little Calthorpe coupé with me which I used as a runabout for short distances, and I thought I ought to chance it over the 198 miles to Dublin, as I believed my wife was alone in the house. I had a little petrol in the tank, and Vesey Stoney of Rosturk Castle gave me enough to take me on to Balla, where I spent the night and where I was lucky enough to get my tank filled. No one at Balla had any definite news about what had happened, and it was not until I got to Castlerea and called on The O'Conor Don that I learnt the true facts. He told me that on the previous day he had started for Dublin in his motor in company with the parish priest. They had heard vague rumours of a rising at Mullingar, but when they got to Maynooth they found a company of soldiers helping the police, who turned them back, saying that if they got into Dublin their car would certainly be taken by the rebels, and that they would be shot ruthlessly if they made any resistance. They said that the rebels held the Post Office and had occupied the workhouses and some large buildings all over the city, and that firing was going on at every corner. The rebels had omitted to cut the telephones, and troops were coming up from the Curragh, and the officer told The O'Conor Don that there were probably enough of them on the way, with guns and equipment, *en route* for France, who would be stopped and who would probably be able to crush the rising in a comparatively short time. He said that an enormous number of people had been killed, and that the firing was getting worse

every moment. The O'Conor Don had then returned home, and he advised me to abandon any attempt to get to Dublin, but to stay with him for the time being. I knew the country lanes round Dublin so well that I felt if I could get as far as Maynooth I would be able to make my way home all right. So The O'Conor Don provided me with sandwiches and drink, and I pushed on via Longford and Mullingar, passing many young men on cycles making their way up to Dublin whom I deemed to be Sinn Feiners answering the call to arms. Outside Mullingar two of them got off their cycles when they heard me coming and tried to stop me, no doubt to take my car. I went full speed ahead and they side-stepped in time. Fortunately they had no revolvers. After that I was unmolested, but when I reached Maynooth I was warned by the military that things were going very badly, and that it was certain death to go into the city with the car. I therefore branched off to the south and skirted the Dublin Mountains to Glencullen ; thence I dropped down to Foxrock and found my wife and daughter-in-law sitting on the steps listening to the booming of the big guns over Dublin.

A letter was awaiting me from Nathan enclosing a pass through the city and a warrant from the Lord Lieutenant appointing me chairman of a committee which was charged with the arrangements for securing and safeguarding the food supplies of the city, for all the shops had run out, and there was neither bread, meat,

butter, nor milk obtainable, and the people were looting.

The committee consisted of Colonel Edgeworth Johnstone, the Chief Commissioner of Police; Colonel Taylor, of the R.A.S.C., Sir Horace Plunkett, Mr. Leonard, and one or two others; and as I was given authority to add anyone I wished, I appointed Mr. Ponsonby of Kilcooley, Charles O'Conor and Mr. Lane as additional members. Captain R. Kelly was secretary, and a more efficient person I have seldom met. The success of the committee's operations was largely due to his foresight. We held our meetings in the Lower Castle Yard, and the business of getting there was not without an excitement of its own, as the streets were closed to the public and were held by very young English soldiers who were being sniped from the roof-tops and in rather a nervy state, ready to loose off their rifles on the smallest provocation. The rebels were known to use motor-cars for their raids, and were quite expected to come up within range of the troops and fire upon them and then make off. A full car was therefore always looked upon with suspicion, and if one did not stop when signalled to do so the troops were not going to take any chances.

Horace Plunkett was driving in to the meeting, and when he was coming down Merrion Square West the troops at Nassau Street corner raised their hands and signalled him to stop. Horace Plunkett, however, took out his pass, held it aloft, waved it, and proceeded on his way; and like Rudyard Kipling's "'arf-trained recruitie" who

"wonders to find he is frequent deceased," Plunkett wondered to find his car riddled with bullets, one of his passengers shot in the back and another through the arm! Two of the Food Committee were therefore *hors de combat* after the first meeting, and another member, Mr. Leonard, was shot through the ear and foot, but it was a rebel bullet in this instance and not a friendly British one that did the damage, so it must have been a great solace to him to know that he was not the victim of a regrettable mistake.

I took very good care to be always alone in my car when going in to the meetings, and as it was too small to seem dangerous, I never got touched. But it was a creepy business driving through the deserted streets; occasionally I would hear a distant report and a sharp smack on a house near by and would see where the bullet had struck by a red brick crumbling to powder. Once I found myself passing a house in Baggot Street where a brisk engagement suddenly opened over my head between some rebels on a house-top and some troops on Baggot Street Bridge. I crouched close under the wall, afraid to go either forward or back; there was no reason to fear the rebels' shots, as they would have had to lean far over the parapet of the roof to have got at me, but the soldiers were shooting wildly, and if they had depressed their aim too much they might have made things unpleasant. They kept waving me away, but I had no desire to run the gauntlet across the open, so I waited under the wall until the engagement was over.

Before our committee met, I went to see Nathan in his office to congratulate him upon having held the Castle, as he and Colonel Johnstone between them had successfully guarded all possible means of ingress and egress the moment news of the rising reached them. They had thereby baffled the rebels, one of whose first objectives had been the occupation of the seat of government. Johnstone, as he always is in times of danger and tribulation, was cool as a cucumber, but Nathan was naturally terribly upset at not having foreseen the eventuality of the rebellion, and told me he had placed his resignation in the hands of the Prime Minister. I did not imagine that they would let him go at such a juncture, and neither, I think, did he; and he was much hurt at the acceptance of his resignation by wire next day. I then went to see Birrell to ask his support and approval in the allocation of two private funds we controlled, to carry on the administration and to prevent famine in the city, which we proposed to do by commandeering food in all parts of the country and getting it sent up by motor lorries, train or sea.

"My dear man," said Birrell, "you may count on my approval, but I'm afraid my support won't help you much. I shall probably be in the Clock Tower to-morrow."

He was very sad over the tragic termination of his work and his political career. Ten of the best years of his life wasted.

There was no post or telegraph or other way of communicating with the Treasury, so I had

to chance it about the purchase of food; but as matters turned out, we recovered from the butchers, grocers and bakers practically all the money we paid for the herds of cattle we bought and slaughtered, and the groceries and foodstuffs which we bought from the country and distributed to the retailers, so that the losses on the financial transactions of the committee were almost inappreciable.

Lord Wimborne was at the Viceregal Lodge at the time the rebellion broke out, and I believe that he showed great initiative and courage in the emergency, and that it was owing to his arrangements by wireless and telephones that the military at the Curragh were apprised of what was going on in sufficient time to strike in at a critical moment during the outbreak. If the rebels had not stupidly omitted to secure the telephones, they would have been able to cause the Government and the military serious embarrassment, which would have rendered the suppression of the rebellion a much longer and more difficult business than it was.

Wimborne was not saddled with any of the responsibility for the occurrence of the Sinn Fein rising during his Viceroyalty. He would have had a very good answer in the fact that he never was given any opportunity of exercising any responsibilities in regard to the Sinn Fein movement, for although the maintenance of order was nominally vested in the Lord Lieutenant-General and General Governor of Ireland, the suppression of political associations would be in the hands

of the Chief Secretary and the Cabinet. There was therefore no question of his resignation until the necessity for a military Lord Lieutenant became apparent later on.

Birrell and Nathan took their departure while martial law was still being administered by Sir John Maxwell, and the strongholds of the rebels were rapidly crumbling under the big guns.

CHAPTER XXIX

AFTER THE REBELLION; MR. DUKE

MR. DUKE and Sir Robert Chalmers came over as Chief and Under-Secretaries and found the rebellion crushed, the Sinn Feiners utterly down and out, their leaders either dead or undergoing penal servitude, the public shocked and subdued, and life once more secure and the people free to pursue their daily avocations. They were two strong men, and there was a belief in many quarters that they were commissioned to take a firm line and enforce and maintain the order which had been established. Some influential people, interested in recruiting, were of opinion that conscription might even safely be put into force, and that many of those who had been implicated in the rebellion would have found in it a means of escape from the Nemesis which might follow the unholy alliance with the Germans. It was argued that many had joined Sinn Fein for the purpose of escaping conscription, and if the results of the Sinn Fein movement had been to let them in for the very thing they had sought to avoid, Sinn Fein might have been finally discredited. Some also believed that English opinion was so savage at the rebellion and at the German alliance, that the Cabinet would announce that the Home Rule Act would

be given to Ireland when it was believed that the people would accept it in a friendly spirit; but that as they had proved rebellious and hostile to England, the measure would be hung up until they showed that they could be trusted to govern themselves without seeking the disruption of the Empire. Meanwhile the country was to be committed to a firm and impartial government under Duke and Chalmers.

However, it speedily became plain that the Government had no such deep plans, and that, far from Duke and Chalmers having been sent over to carry out a definite drastic policy to maintain the order secured by Sir John Maxwell's martial law, they were merely intended to keep things going and to swim about in the dark waters of Irish trouble in the hope of finding a new inspiration for the future government of the country. Able men as they both were, they were without any special qualifications whatever for this latter task. They were uninformed and blind as regards the root of the Irish trouble, and were obviously afraid to imperil their high reputations by taking the initiative for the solution of a problem which they had not seriously studied. Chalmers made no bones about it; he told me that he was forced to take the post of Under-Secretary temporarily, he knew nothing about it, he was not well acquainted with the personnel of the Irish departments, he had no interest whatever in the Irish question. It was clear that he hated the squabbles and despised the ideals of the people, and while he knew that he was a power as head of the

Treasury, he realized that he could make no mark as Under-Secretary, and his one idea appeared to be to get back to London as soon as ever he could. He kept Irish officials at a distance as much as possible, as he did not want to be bothered with them. There was a pleasant but pushing little official of the Land Commission named Bailey who had always made himself useful to every Under-Secretary the moment one set his foot in the country; he cornered them, shadowed them, and tried to get into their counsels on every subject. It was rather amusing to observe him trying to tuck Chalmers under his wing. Chalmers simply regarded him as non-existent; he seemed to look upon him in the same light as one views the black spots before one's eyes after a liver attack. When Bailey came rushing up to Chalmers the latter simply did not see him, or if he did, preferred to regard him as the hallucination following a lobster supper. Bailey was furious, and used to go stamping about declaring that "that fellow Chalmers" was a most pestilent creature, and that it was an insult to the country to send him over.

I suppose the Government must have had some particular reason for sending Duke as Chief Secretary, but what it was passed the wit of Irish people to discern. Duke was so full of sound law that there was little room in him for imagination, so essential for anyone dealing with Irish affairs.

If the Irish problem had been one which could be settled by referring it for counsel's opinion, or if it could have been settled out of court by the

lawyers on both sides, Duke would no doubt have been in his element, but he did not seem to have the least understanding of what was resented in the attitude of England to Ireland, and if he had understood it, he would not have been capable of seeing anything intelligible in it. So he worked along in his own style, dignified, courteous and conscientious, without ever realizing that it was the very act of giving the country to such as he — wise, superior and English in thought—which made the Irish people so fractious and so difficult to govern.

He certainly was the most conscientious worker, and put himself to more trouble to obtain useless information than anyone I have ever met. Someone in London, before he came over, must, I think, have advised him to visit the poorer districts with me, and I was rather surprised when, a few days after his arrival, he asked me to arrange a tour. I should have thought that as I had been so closely associated with Walter Long and Gerald Balfour, he would have been warned by the Castle to have taken someone more in the confidence of the Nationalists. No sooner had he asked me than he regretted it, but as his private secretary gave me the tip that he was rather uncomfortable about it, I arranged to take him only as far as Mallaranny and to get Mr. Micks, of the Congested Districts Board, to meet us there and take him off my hands.

Hitherto when Chief Secretaries were starting on their trips they took people and things as they came and made no particular plans, talked with everyone they met and picked up what impressions

they could in the daily lives of the people. Duke, however, on his arrival at Galway, went straight to the police barracks, called together all the police officers in the county, put them in the witness-box, as it were, and subjected them to the minutest cross-examination about things relating to their districts which they had never bothered to think about. I had to get him on to Recess, forty miles distant by car, that evening, and after he had spent four hours passing a tooth-comb through the brains of the R.I.C. officers, and I was beginning to wonder whether they had news of some great calamity or a new rebellion to confide in him, a police officer came downstairs mopping his brow, utterly exhausted.

"He's after giving me an hour of it," he remarked. "He made me to give him the population of all the towns and villages in my district, their industries, area and valuation, the length of the rivers and the height of the mountains, and the devil a thing was I able to answer him sometimes except from my imagination, and I hope he is not going to check the figures I gave him."

There was really nothing to be gained by this sort of inquiry; these small Galway towns are all much of a muchness and might all have been referred to in a conversation which my colleague, Richard Bagwell, had with a car-man when driving into Newport, County Mayo.

"Are there any industries in Newport?" he asked.

"Oh, begor there are," was the reply. "Fine industries entirely."

"What are they?" asked Bagwell.

The car-driver thought deeply for a while, and then, leaning over, he observed impressively, "There's a power of whisky drunk in Newport."

"Yes," said Bagwell, "but that isn't exactly what I meant. What other industries, local industries, are there?"

The driver again thought for a while, and said confidentially, "There's a power of porter drunk in Newport."

"But," asked Bagwell, "is the whisky and porter made here?"

"Ah, not at all, 'tis the best of Jameson and Guinness, and it's wonderful industrious the people are in the way of dhrinkin' it."

The Irish towns have simply no distinguishing characteristics. Lord Morris told me that he was once at an hotel in Italy and at the same table, close to him, was an Irish priest and an English-speaking Italian clergyman who was holding forth about the beauties of Milan and Vienna. At last the Irish priest thought he must show that Ireland could go one better.

"Were you ever in County Longford?" he asked the Italian.

"Alas, no," was the reply.

"Well, sir," continued the priest, mentioning two of the most dismal towns in Ireland, "Granard is a Grand Town, but Longford is Truly Magnificent."

Well, Duke kept the police officers hard at it, and was absorbing the fact, no doubt, that there was a power of porter drunk in Loughrea,

and that Oranmore was a Grand Town and that Athenry was Truly Magnificent, when, feeling myself responsible for getting him to Recess for dinner, I broke into his conference, where he was surrounded by his perplexed police officers, and told him that he would have to come on or we could not keep to scheduled time.

"But I have not half done," he said; "I am afraid I shall have to ask you gentlemen to come on with me to Recess."

So all these county and district inspectors had to pack into cars and follow us forty miles into the wilds, and after dinner they sat up till midnight undergoing the cross-examination into the special characteristics of Galway villages, before they were free to return home.

"Anything that I gave him," said one rueful district inspector who had found his car punctured at midnight before his start home, "he could have got from Thoms' Directory if he had stopped in Dublin."

I think Duke enjoyed seeing the country and the people, but I often wondered why he troubled himself to compile useless information, as upon all matters of general interest relating to trade or industry I think he was without exception the best-informed man I have ever met. One was never in his company for long without learning something.

As a parliamentary chief he was rather trying, as he did not like to be fought on matters of administration, and in this respect he was a complete change from his predecessors. Birrell, Bryce and

Long always expected you to find any weakness you could in any policy or act they contemplated; you might fight it or try to turn it into ridicule and do your very best to shake them; they quite understood and never took offence. They much preferred to hear the criticisms privately from me than to have them sprung upon them unawares by hostile tongues. Duke was quite different. He rather resented any strong objection being taken to anything he proposed. I remember once he proposed to stop a surcharge which had been made by an auditor and upheld on appeal. I remonstrated strongly and pointed out the dangers of it, perhaps a little too vigorously, but my only object was to keep him out of hot water. He wrote to me that it was a matter of serious concern that the Vice-President of the Board should accuse the President of meditating an illegality! However, after a time I think he realized that I had no object except to make the Local Government Board administration under his regime a success.

Duke had not much experience of Poor Law administration, and we seldom troubled him with papers on this subject; but one file, relating to a proposal to dismiss the master of a workhouse, I sent to him, as it was so absolutely unprecedented and so quaint in its way that I thought it might amuse him, as he had a keen sense of humour under all his stiff formality. The case was this: the chairman of a certain small union in the West was a small farmer living in a rather poor, dilapidated house, to which the poultry and live-stock had the private *entrée*, and as his wife was about

to increase the population the master of the workhouse, who was a great friend of the family, tried to persuade him to let the wife come into the workhouse hospital for her confinement. The chairman did not like the idea, not wishing that his offspring should first see the light of day in a workhouse. But the master pointed out that she should have a separate ward for herself; it would be a ward of honour, so to speak, with flowers in the windows and pictures pinned on to the walls, and grand coloured papers in the fireplace, and there would be clean linen, good air and good food, and, best of all, the hospital midwife ready in her own private apartment next door.

Still the chairman was obdurate, but when his wife heard the advantages of the proposal she cut short all further discussions on the subject by marching up to the workhouse and ensconcing herself in the ward of honour forthwith.

In due time a fine, bouncing baby boy was born, and it then became the master's duty to enter the birth in the births register and to report it in his journal. The birth of a son to so distinguished a person as the chairman was an event in the annals of the Poor Law hospital, and the master was determined to throw a bit of pomp and circumstance into the announcement, so in recording it in his journal he stated that the wife of Mr. Denis O'Dowd, chairman of the union, gave birth to a "legitimate male child." Now, this remark about the legitimacy of the child was impressive in its contrast with the usual workhouse births which the master

had to report, but it was quite unnecessary, as the child was born to the lawful wife of the chairman; and the word led to unfortunate results.

The reporter for the local newspaper, being an absent-minded young man and being unaccustomed to any reference to the legitimacy of children born in wedlock, copied the word into his notes erroneously as "illegitimate," and the next issue of the paper, which reached the village on Sunday morning while the chairman was visiting his wife in her ward of honour, created a tremendous sensation among the villagers by the announcement of the birth of an "illegitimate child" to Mrs. Denis O'Dowd!

The chairman on his return home was amazed to find himself surrounded by sympathizers wringing his hand with commiseration, and cries of "Ah me, poor fella! This is a terrible thing now," "How did ye find her out? and she such a quiet, dacent woman;" "Who is the blackgyard, anyway? Won't ye desthroy him?" "Begad, women are the divil an' all," and so forth. The enraged chairman expostulated in vain. It was pointed out to him that there it was in black and white, and "ye couldn't deny that it was in print and in the master's book." The chairman then betook himself to the newspaper office and frightened the life out of the staff, and in the next issue it was explained that, owing to an unfortunate mistake, their reporter had miscopied the word and desired most humbly to apologize. This was confirmed by the reporter himself, at the next meeting, when he frankly admitted that

not only was the child legitimate, but it was beyond all question the legitimatest child the district had ever produced.

Then the vials of the chairman's wrath were turned on the master, and the Local Government Board were called upon to dismiss him for having made an entry in his journal that had misled a decent young reporter. However, the board could not take this extreme course in view of the master's explanation that, so far as his report was concerned, it was strictly and literally true, and was only the confirmation of a fact highly honourable to the chairman and his lady.

However, that was all very well, but the people had seen it in print, and it is still whispered in the village that "God only knows what took place up at the workhouse, but there's some quare mystery about the birth of little Tim O'Dowd."

I think Duke hoped by a policy of sympathetic compromise, and by a compliance with the wishes of the people where possible, to stereotype in their minds a picture of himself as a man with a mind receptive to any suggestions or negotiations with regard to policy or administration, and for this reason he would snuff out no proposal offhand, even though he knew it was impracticable, and would keep the people in a state of prolonged and irritated suspense. This, I believe, was about the only thing which affected his popularity.

To give a case in point. There was a wretchedly managed little railway in the north of Ireland which furnished the minimum of convenience to

the public at the maximum of cost, and which was seeking for enlarged powers by private Bill. The Government were hostile to the measure, and the district councils affected by it all supported the Government's view; and although their rates were high, and the districts were in great financial straits, the councils went to a great expense in opposing the Bill, with the result that it was thrown out.

Then the question came of paying the costs of opposition, and as the councils had no funds available they were unpleasantly surprised to find they had no power to borrow for the purpose; accordingly deputations, accompanied by their member of Parliament, waited on the Chief Secretary and presented their case. The Chief expressed great sympathy with their laudable and successful efforts, and promised that the matter should have his most earnest consideration. More than this he would not state; and it was impossible to get a definite reply, although letter after letter was written. At last something had to be done, and the M.P. in question cornered Duke in the House of Commons, and told him that the people of the district really must know, yes or no, whether the Government were going to help them. Mr. Duke's reply was couched in these terms—the M.P. in question took a pencil note of them while they were fresh in his memory. The Government "would view with much satisfaction any efforts taken by the local authorities to defray the expenses incurred in connexion with these proceedings from their own resources." As they

had no resources, this beautifully expressed negative exasperated the M.P. a great deal more than if Duke had informed the councils that the Treasury would see them damned before they would contribute a penny towards their costs.

For a long time after the rebellion was suppressed the country was quiet, the Sinn Feiners' leaders were either dead or in prison, or in Frongoch Camp, and Chalmers took the first opportunity of getting back to his post in the Treasury.

He made few, if any, friends during his stay in Ireland, but I fancy the truth is that, under all his brusque off-handedness, he was a rather heart-broken man. He had lost two sons in the war. I saw photographs of them on his mantelpiece while waiting in his room one day: splendid young men with strong, bright, fearless faces, and typical of all that one hopes to see in a rising generation of Englishmen.

CHAPTER XXX

MR. ASQUITH IN IRELAND

THE Chief Secretary appointed the Assistant Secretary of the Home Office, Sir William Byrne, as Under-Secretary in Chalmers' place, no doubt believing that as he was a Catholic his appointment as Under-Secretary would be popular. Sir William Byrne had been a member of the commission which had advised the dismissal of all civil servants implicated in the rebellion, and his appointment was not greeted with any enthusiasm. He was popular among officials, but he had come into the Irish maëlstrom too late in life to be of much help to anyone; his tenure of office was short, and he did not appear to be on very cordial terms with his chief.

The question of what to do with the Sinn Feiners who were interned was a very troublesome one to the Government, and the Prime Minister came over to Ireland and conferred with the Lord Lieutenant and the Chief Secretary on the subject. It was stated that he had visited the rebels, and had actually shaken hands with them. He has denied this allegation, and I quite believe his denial, as I doubt if the rebels would have shaken hands with him if they could have avoided it. But he undoubtedly interviewed them, and whatever passed between them his amicable attitude

seems to have put Sinn Fein in good heart, and to have afforded them hopes of an early release of their imprisoned members. In due time the doors of the internment camp were opened and the rebels liberated in batches. As might have been expected, they set to work at once to prepare their plans for the guerilla warfare which has proved to be a much more successful way of forcing the English Government into a surrender to them than any open rebellion would have been, which the Government would have been compelled by English opinion to stamp out ruthlessly.

Mr. Asquith stayed at the Lodge, and Lord Wimborne, who always wanted to do the correct thing as Viceroy, considered that the Prime Minister should have conferences with all the head officials, and gave a series of dinners to which they were invited. I felt pretty sure that this was a mere piece of window-dressing, and that the wearied Prime Minister did not want to be bothered with Irish officials' ideas, so I did not trouble to think out any points for his consideration. Other officials took a different view. I found, on getting to the Lodge, that Sir Henry Doran, the able, zealous official of the C.D. Board, was brimming over with facts, problems and suggestions to rub into the Prime Minister if he had the chance.

After dinner Wimborne brought me round to Asquith first. I could see that he was very tired, and the only thing he spoke to me about was the impending doom of Roger Casement, and its

probable effect upon Irish opinion. The rest of our time together was spent in stifling our yawns and in a perfunctory discussion on climate, the crops, and other casual topics.

Then Wimborne brought up Sir Henry Doran and I returned to my seat opposite. I heard Asquith say something to Doran about his interesting work, and then the storm broke.

Doran opened the flood-gates of his soul, and with an earnestness and volubility which it is impossible to exaggerate, he poured out a stream of facts and events in the ear of the bewildered Prime Minister which no living man could possibly have assimilated on top of a heavy dinner. I heard references to unearned increments, economic holdings, law officers' opinions, seaweed rights, division of grass-land, cottage-building, small-holdings—it was a clever, rapid, breathless microcosm of the history, and hopes, of the C.D. Board; and just as Doran was getting his second wind, and breaking forth into a dissertation upon turbary, Wimborne's eye caught the S.O.S. signal of the Prime Minister and opined that the time had come to join the ladies, and we all rose from our seats.

Coming out of the room, I congratulated Doran on his amazing and masterful summary of the C.D. Board history.

"Yes," said Doran anxiously, "but did he take it all in, think you?"

One looks back at Duke's time in Ireland with a melancholy pleasure, as it was our last glimpse

of life in Ireland when people could pursue their avocations without dread of the pestilence that walketh in darkness and the arrow that flieth by day.

The release of the interned Sinn Feiners was very rapidly followed by the reorganization of their forces for the new campaign, and Duke, having realized that he was powerless to do anything to bring about a rapprochement, was, no doubt, very glad when the vacancy on the Bench in England enabled him to escape to a judgeship —for which his life's work had so admirably fitted him—before his failure to achieve any good results as an Irish Secretary had become more apparent.

CHAPTER XXXI

LORD FRENCH

ALTHOUGH the country appeared to be fairly quiet on the surface about this time, there was a strong under-current of indefinable fear and unrest prevailing in the minds of the people, and all who had the welfare and peace of the country at heart learned with great relief that Lord French had been appointed, with what was generally understood to be an absolutely free hand to take such steps as he deemed to be necessary for the maintenance of order and the restoration of the trade and business of the country.

Lord French put up at the Royal Hospital while the Viceregal Lodge was being prepared for his reception, and I had a long talk with him there soon after his arrival. I had imagined, as indeed I believe most people did, that he had come over solely to prevent a recrudescence of Sinn Fein, but he gave me the impression that the establishment of Home Rule was his ultimate hope, and that his immediate object was to restore confidence and to clear away all obstacles which stood in the way of the consummation of this policy, which he seemed to be convinced was inevitable, as the natural sequence of events of the past fifty years. I gathered from what he said to me at different

times that he would have gone to greater lengths to meet the national aspirations than most of the Unionists, who had perforce accepted the Government of Ireland Act as an inexorable necessity.

He had a residence and property at Drumdoe, on the shores of Loch Key in Roscommon, and his belief in the speedy settlement of the Irish question may be judged from the fact that he started buildings and extensions there which must have cost a mint of money, with a full intention of settling down and making it his home.

His hopes received a rude shock, as his arrival in Ireland synchronized with the opening of the campaign of the guerilla warfare by the Sinn Feiners. Young men were being ordered to join the Republican army or leave the country, and they knew what refusal meant; once they joined they had to take part in the ambushing of police, the shooting of unarmed people, and the other horrors of the Republican régime.

The great strength of the Republican army was not at the time, I believe, due to its universal belief in a republic, or to any voluntary desire to fight for it, but to the fact that they had been conscripted by Sinn Fein and that desertion meant death. This new Sinn Fein outbreak was disheartening to all who hoped for a settlement, as it seemed to render it impossible that the British Government could ever hand the loyal population over to a people whose only object at the time seemed to be ruin and destruction to all who claimed to be citizens of the British Empire.

It was a position of extraordinary difficulty

for Lord French. The public, who had seen his success in Flanders in breaking the first onrush of the German hordes at the zenith of their strength and preparedness, with his "contemptible little army"—conceived that the task of rounding up the so-called Republican forces of scattered groups of marauders would be child's play to him. No doubt if he had been given a mandate to do so and had really been allowed the same free hand as he had when commander of the forces in France, and if he could have muzzled the Press and stopped discussions in Parliament upon every step he took, the second rising of the Sinn Fein might have been settled as effectively as the first, and in as short a time; but this course was not open to him, even if he wished to adopt it. Everything he did the Government had to be prepared to defend and explain to the Opposition in Parliament. Mr. Edward Shortt, who succeeded Duke as Chief Secretary, though appointed on much the same terms in relation to the Viceroy as Trevelyan was as Chief Secretary to Lord Spencer, far from showing any marked desire to follow Lord French's lead and to leave the initiative to him, seemed more disposed to strike out a line of his own, in many respects at variance with that of Lord French. He relied on the influence of the leading Catholics—who had really no weight whatever with the Sinn Fein powers—to smooth his path during his political connexion with Ireland, which he made no secret of regarding only as a step towards his ultimate ambition—to follow the footsteps of his predecessor to a seat on the Bench. And so,

with a Lord Lieutenant having to reckon with Ministers in London, with Ministers influenced by the attacks of the Opposition, and with a disgruntled Chief Secretary at the Castle, the Sinn Fein started their guerilla warfare under the most favourable auspices.

Shortt struck me as a capable but obstinate man, too much bound to preconceived opinions, and too apt to regard blind obstinacy as representing strength, and to look upon any modification of his opinions as a sign of weakness. Such a characteristic in the second in command could only be maddening to a man like Lord French, with his great experience, heavy responsibility and quick temper, and no one was surprised to find Shortt shifted out of Ireland after a very limited stay.

Sir William Byrne resigned the Under-Secretaryship about this time, and Shortt, on the advice of Lord Granard, I believe, who was reputed to have a great deal of influence over him, appointed James MacMahon, Secretary of the Post Office in Dublin, as Under-Secretary, much to MacMahon's dismay. MacMahon was a popular, kindly soul, pleasant to everybody and beloved in his own department, and to be taken from this office and plunged into a vortex of Irish trouble which was becoming more acute each day, in a department in Dublin Castle entirely unfamiliar to him, was a severe trial to him, as it would have been to any man. But MacMahon was one of the inside pillars of the Catholic Church, and Shortt was convinced that a Catholic and a strong Nationalist was necessary as Under-Secretary, and he put the

proposal to MacMahon in such a way that it was impossible for him, as a loyal civil servant, to refuse.

MacMahon's ignorance of Dublin Castle's administration, and its ramifications through all the allied departments, put him at a great disadvantage, so much so that the burden of the work of Under-Secretary fell on the shoulders of Sir John Taylor, Assistant Under-Secretary, who had borne the brunt of it for some years past and felt rather bitterly having been passed over.

Lord French had appointed Edward Saunderson, a Local Government inspector, as his private secretary, and Shortt had appointed as his private secretary Samuel Watt of the Local Government Board, who had been my private secretary for some time. Both these appointments were wrongfully attributed by the Nationalist Press to my desire to infuse an Orange atmosphere into Dublin Castle, but the atmosphere of Dublin Castle gave me no concern whatever. I did not care what winds prevailed there so long as the Local Government Board was left alone, and as a matter of fact I had hardly any acquaintance with the Northern members. My part in the matter was confined to giving these two gentlemen the recommendations asked for and agreeing to their being seconded to the particular services.

Lord French had always been receptive to suggestions from all sides, and in order to get the benefit of advice outside that of officials who were at his command, he appointed an advisory committee of men of mark representing different

parts of the country. The committee consisted of Lord Granard, Sir Thomas Stafford, Frank Brooke, Stanley Harrington, and one or two others whose names I have forgotten, all of whom were sworn in as Privy Councillors. But the committee seldom met officially. I do not think they had more than one formal meeting, as Lord French's strong measures against the Sinn Fein organization, following soon after the committee's appointment, made them rather afraid to identify themselves with his administration. Living in remote parts of the country they could not afford to take the risk of their lives being sacrificed or their property destroyed by way of retaliation.

Meanwhile the campaign of outrage and terror was daily becoming more bloody and acute. The Sinn Fein press-work was admirably organized. The reports of their outrages and depredations were stifled in the Irish Press to a great extent —indeed, the only newspaper which never hesitated to give publicity to them was the English *Morning Post;* while the offences and retaliations of the R.I.C. were always brought before the House of Commons by one or two English and Irish members who would have left nothing undone to disparage the Government. Shortt was extremely lucky to get out of it when he did, especially as the Home Secretaryship became vacant at the time, and the Coalition Government were always ready to recognize the risks of service in Ireland provided they had not been taken by Irish loyalists.

CHAPTER XXXII

WESTERN HOSPITALITY

SHORTT was a man with an iron constitution, and the only Chief Secretary who passed with honours the ordeal by hospitality which confronts all of those who travel in the west of Ireland. For a Chief Secretary to call upon the priest of the parish and to refuse a friendly glass of spirits would be regarded as an intentional slight. Birrell was a wretched performer in this convivial sense; one nip of poteen on an empty stomach and he was a wreck for the rest of the day. However, he devised the brilliant plan of appointing his private secretary as Deputy Whisky-Taster to the Chief Secretary's Household, with power to present an immediate report at any time as to the excellence or otherwise of the stimulant. The private secretary in question was a long, lean Welsh Nonconformist, imbued with strict temperance principles, very clever and biddable, and with a profound conviction that it was his duty to stand between his chief and all harm; thus, towards the close of any visit, when the parish priest produced the inevitable whisky bottle and tumblers and poured out a brimming goblet worthy of a Cabinet Minister, Birrell, with an air of joyful anticipation, would seize it, and raising it to his lips pledge the parish priest, and then hand it

on to the secretary. "Here you are, my boy, you are a better judge than I am of this; down with it and tell me exactly what you think." The secretary, in duty bound, would gulp it down, and with choking throat and nose snorting whisky fumes and his eyes streaming water, would manage to blurt out to Birrell, who was waiting his verdict with the semblance of the greatest anxiety, that it seemed to him to be a very powerful and stimulating fluid. He had usually to be helped to the motor after these visits, but he deemed it to be one of the sacrifices to be made by a well-regulated private secretary, and if his nose became redder and redder as the tours proceeded he carried it high and proudly as the oriflamme of loyal service to the Crown.

Arthur Balfour also had the reputation of being an utterly useless person where good drink was concerned. There is a legend which is told and believed by everybody in the West about him, but I cannot vouch for it myself as I was not there. On one long journey he is said to have arrived at an hotel drenched to the skin, cold and wretched, with the back of his throat all raw, and shivers down his back, and he was advised that the only thing to save him from a bad chill was a good stiff tumbler of whisky. The whisky was produced, and beside it a glass jug of poteen. The host poured out half a tumbler of whisky and told Balfour to toss it off. Balfour, with fingers blue with cold and teeth chattering, reached out for the poteen jug, thinking it contained water, and, to the amazement of his host, slushed

the half tumbler of whisky up to the brim with the poteen, and hastily tossed it off. Rumour says that for the next two days, after this one tumbler, he could not leave his bed, and his condition most nearly resembled that described by Rudyard Kipling in his deathless ballad of *La Nuit Blanche*.

Compare this with Shortt's strength of mind and body. I happened to mention to him that I was going to Galway to see if I could do anything for the survivors of the *Pretty Polly* fishing boat, which had been blown up by a German submarine. Shortt said he would like to come too. I persuaded that most brilliant Irishman Stephen Gwynn to accompany us, as I thought Shortt ought to have some Nationalist to keep him company on his travels as a counterblast to an official conductor. When we arrived at Recess the day was so perfect for fishing that Gwynn left us to fish the river, and Shortt and I went on. We first called at the parish priest's house, and I quite forgot to warn Shortt that, although it was 11 o'clock in the day, he would be pressed to take a drink by this notoriously hospitable man, and find it hard to refuse. What I had foreseen happened. The parish priest promised to come with us and show us the house of the survivors of the *Pretty Polly*, but he hoped we would come back to lunch with him afterwards. Meanwhile the Chief Secretary, he declared, positively must have a drink after his long drive. He produced the bottle and tumblers, and, as Shortt happened to be looking out of the window, the invitation to "say when"

met with no response, and Shortt was faced with a jorum that would have put me in my grave if I had taken it at that hour of the day. He looked rather surprised, but swallowed it down, and we then started for a long walk to the survivors' home. When we got back the parish priest said lunch would not be ready for half an hour, meanwhile Shortt really must have another drink after his long walk, and he filled him up another stiff tumbler of whisky, which Shortt after some protest also dispatched as in duty bound, without a wink. At lunch, almost before Shortt could look round, another half tumbler was pressed upon him, and the parish priest asked him to drink it and tell him what he thought of it. Shortt did so, and said he thought it was very good. Whereupon the parish priest said it was Jameson's seven-year-old whisky, but he really would like him to try John Power's seven-year-old and say which he preferred, as there was a great difference of opinion on the point; and he took a bottle of Power's out of its paper, uncorked it, and filled up another whacking sample of this. Shortt drank it and said on the whole he thought he preferred Jameson's, but he was not sure.

After the dinner was over we got on the subject of poteen, and the parish priest said he did not encourage its distillation, but he happened to have a very old bottle of the stuff as a curiosity, and he would very much like the Chief to taste it. It was a white fluid, very harmless looking, and he poured out a generous libation of this for Shortt, who drank it without, I think, realizing that it

was raw spirit. I was sorry for him, and I was afraid he would be furious with me for letting him in for conviviality of this kind; but it was sympathy wasted, for the peculiar and remarkable thing is that all this whisky had no more effect upon him than if it had been water. Driving him back to Recess in my car afterwards, we got into a very complicated conversation about rating, and his head, speech and mind were as clear as a bell.

Certainly his amazing power of carrying his drink was a priceless asset for him as Chief Secretary on tour. I long since found my only chance of life was to pretend to total abstinence, which gave me the character in the West of rather a weak, delicate creature. I could not help envying Shortt the possession of a mucous membrane which rendered him impervious to the most virulent form of Irish hospitality.

Whisky was hard to get during the war, and the poteen trade in the western islands gained a great impetus by the scarcity, especially as the police could not be spared for revenue work as they were in normal years.

The police receive a very substantial reward for every seizure of poteen, whether the quantity be large or small, and it is extremely risky, therefore, to have it on the premises, as the £100 fine might not be remitted if the person found with the spirit was in a position to pay it in full. I was detected by the police with poteen on one occasion, and had a rather peculiar escape from the consequences.

An old man in the Galway islands, who conceived himself to be under some obligation to me, sent me up to Foxrock one Christmas a gallon jar of poteen. It arrived quite safely in a wooden box, and was evidently what they call "double shot" of excellent quality. I was rather disturbed over this gift, as it would never have done for a person in my position to run the risk of a conviction for defrauding the revenue. I therefore told the little Kerry parlour-maid we had at the time that she must pour it all down the drain in the stable-yard. She seemed very reluctant to make away with the product of Irish industry in this manner, and when I asked her a few days later if she had got rid of it she said she was just going to do so, and made me the same answer after every inquiry. At last I came across the jar empty, just when I was beginning to become alarmed, so I therefore thought no more about it.

A year afterwards, my son, Adrian, was at the motor races on Port Marnock Strand, and a constable of the R.I.C. came up to him, addressed him by name and entered into conversation with him. After a few remarks about the races, the constable said: "Has your Da any of that poteen in the place now?" Adrian knew nothing of the history of the gallon jar, and said he did not think I ever had any poteen.

"Troth, and he had then," said the constable, "the finest ever ye drank. I was stationed at Knockteely a year last March, and there was a little Kerry girl in the house—I am a Kerry man myself—and the patrol from the barracks never

went past the gate without her bringing them out a good jorum of the poteen. Begorra! there was great competition for the Brighton Road patrol while that poteen was going."

So, while I was trembling with apprehension lest the police should discover this illicit spirit in my house, the police were privately co-operating with me in keeping it out of their sight by pouring it down their own throats.

CHAPTER XXXIII

IAN MACPHERSON

SHORTT was transferred to the Home Office, and was succeeded by Ian Macpherson, in whom Lord French found a strong and helpful coadjutor. He had a great deal of parliamentary work, and carried the Proportional Representation Act, the Irish Public Health Councils Act, and the Land for Soldiers and Sailors Act through the House of Commons, and for work of this kind he was unsurpassed. In his rapid solution of complex points at preliminary discussions on the draft Bills he reminded me of Gerald Balfour, and in the Committee stages in the House of Commons he was tactful and convincing. In fact, taking him all round, I thought him one of the shrewdest Chiefs I had ever served under, courageous and free from prejudices; but his health was bad nearly the whole time he was in Ireland. His anxieties at the War Office, where he was Under-Secretary from the beginning to the end of the war, had taken it out of him, and he needed a rest rather than to be plunged into the vortex of Irish dissension. He had some digestive trouble, and it must have been collar-work for him all the time. The staff of the Local Government Board would have done anything for him. He entered for the Local Government Board Golf Cup, and was drawn against men

in every class—clerks, assistant clerks, auditors, inspectors—and he ran right through to the semi-final, and nearly won the cup; and only that he was seedy at the time and tired very soon, he probably would have done so. By being associated with the recreations he got to know the personnel of the department, and in this way he obtained an idea of the work and responsibility of all ranks which no other Chief Secretary ever had.

The Irish Nationalist prestige had been depreciating at rather an alarming rate, and the Nationalists on the local councils who controlled local government and rating, exercised the patronage and administered some £3,000,000 a year of local expenditure, looked forward with grave apprehension to the possibility of a debacle before the Sinn Feiners at the next local government election. It was to give a chance to minorities and to prevent the rebels sweeping the country at these elections that the Irish Government decided to bring in the proportional representation system of voting.

They were further influenced by the test case of Sligo. Sligo Borough had long been a standing example of all that was most corrupt and careless in local government administration. The council borrowed money to meet current expenditure, and when interest and sinking fund accrued due they borrowed money to repay it again. When interest on the new loan and sinking fund became due they re-borrowed to repay that, and so on; and there was a series of these loans floating at the same time, and never provision in any rate to meet them. The corporation tried to carry on their business by means

of overdrafts from their treasurer, and gave a large salary to the mayor, on the distinct understanding that it was to be applied towards the payment of the interest on the overdrafts. The roads fell out of repair, the water supply gave out, the sanitary condition of the town became appalling, and the end came when the auditor surcharged the mayor's salary, and proceedings were taken against the council by the county for their share of county at large charges. Then the borough council threw up the sponge, and asked the Government board to help them out of their difficulties, promising faithfully to do everything the board required of them. A Bill was accordingly brought in and passed to enable consolidation of the loans and arrangements for the repayment, and for the levying of any rate necessary towards the burden of debt.

Among the clauses of the Bill was one ordering a new election on the principle of proportional representation. The election held under this system was a complete surprise. People of position and property who, heretofore, had never been able to gain a footing on the borough council, were all returned, and the old clique which had brought about the deadlock by their maladministration were reduced to a powerless minority. It is quite probable that the downfall of the old corporation would have taken place under any form of election, as the citizens were heartily sick of them; but the result was attributed to proportional representation, and there was a loud and insistent demand that it should be applied by general enactment to local government elections all over Ireland.

It fell to Ian Macpherson to pilot this Bill through the House of Commons, which he did with consummate skill in the teeth of a strong opposition from the Ulster members. Although great hopes were raised that the measure would have the same effect as it had in Sligo, it fell far short of it. A good many of the old Nationalists were returned, but Sinn Fein swept the board, partly owing to the intimidation at the elections. To the Irish Nationalist Party it was the writing on the wall for the next parliamentary elections.

The bulk of the Irish members probably realized that their days were numbered, though many of them over-estimated their influence and thought they would hold their own with the help of the clergy.

I was staying at Recess when the parliamentary session ended, and William O'Malley, who was touring his constituency with Mr. Kennedy Jones, M.P., whom he had persuaded to come with him and see Connemara, was rather lugubrious about his prospects of retaining his seat. He, however, relied to a great extent on the support of the clergy, and thought that, as he had them on his side, he would probably be returned, although it would be a near thing. There was only one point they had against him. I am not absolutely certain of the facts, but the legend is that at some by-election in a remote part of, I think, Buckinghamshire, the Tory candidate had made a great impression upon the bucolic electors with his prophecy of the results of Home Rule and of the domination of the country by the Pope, which would inevitably follow. The Irish members, he averred, to whom

the Government were about to hand over the country, were as potter's clay in the hands of the Roman Catholic priests, and were afraid of their lives of them, and the Protestants would be burned at the stake upon the smallest possible provocation.

This sort of talk had a tremendous effect upon the ignorant English country bumpkins, and as the election was going to be a very close thing, the Liberal candidate wired urgently to headquarters to send down forthwith some Roman Catholic Irish member of Parliament to combat this allegation and to demonstrate the freedom and independence of the Irish members. William O'Malley being a genial soul and a witty speaker was sent down at once, and as he thought he might say what he liked in a sleepy hollow of a place like this, and as he saw no sign of the Press, he decided to let himself go, and he is said to have surpassed himself in his vigorous oratory. He took the line that he was a devout Catholic, " the divil a stronger one in Ireland," but still if any infernal clergyman dared to dictate to him or to expect him to do an unfair thing to any of his Protestant friends, by the Lord he'd skin him alive, so he would. He finished up with a defiance of clerical influence in terms so fierce that he left the chawbacons fully convinced that if this was a sample Irish Catholic M.P., the Protestants had nothing to fear, but that the Irish priests themselves would really require police protection so long as he was in the country!

His speech was more than successful; the Tory had no answer and was defeated at the polls, and O'Malley was warmly congratulated and very

pleased with his little bit of play acting. But, alas for poor O'Malley! A local reporter was present, and he was so carried away by the spirited and independent denunciation of clerical domination that he published a verbatim report of it in the village rag, and by some unlucky coincidence it got into the hands of a Catholic woman in a town near by, who put it into an envelope and sent it to the leading parish priest of Connemara.

When O'Malley next visited Connemara he had entirely forgotten the incident, and had not the least idea that his speech had been published in any paper; so when requested to call at the presbytery as soon as possible he did so without any misgivings.

He found to his dismay the local clergy sitting round the table with the Bucks newspaper in front of them. Slowly and with emphasis his fiery exorcism was read to him, sentence by sentence, and he was called upon to explain it. Read in cold blood in this way it sounded appalling and violent in the highest degree, and O'Malley put in a very bad time, as the clergy would not agree that English party exigencies were worth considering for a moment. However, in view of his explanation and apologies and his undertaking to do all in his power to get the district large Government grants for relief of distress, nothing further was done, but he was very nervous lest the episode should still rankle in their minds now that a parliamentary election was imminent.

I do not think Kennedy Jones was much help to him with them, as he was too outspoken and

unorthodox in his ideas; and at a big dinner given to him and O'Malley, at which all the priests of the district were bidden, Kennedy Jones started the evening by submitting the proposition that religion was a total failure in Ireland. One after another priests and curates rose and, with outstretched finger, tried to blast the ground from under him with quotations from St. Thomas Aquinas, the early Vincentian Fathers and the Apostle Paul, but Kennedy Jones hooted at these authorities as completely out of date, and fought his point, and even added to his hardihood, when dinner was over, by clearing them all out at "nap."

I have met many English members of Parliament touring about in the West, but I have seldom come across anyone who was such good company and had such fresh and original ideas as Kennedy Jones. But although a light-hearted person he took everything he heard rather seriously, and he was rather shocked at the following experience of his own, which he narrated to me as an example of misguided clerical teaching. He had gone into a little barber's shop to get his hair cut before dining at the presbytery. The barber was a pleasant, bottle-nosed gentleman who reeked of whisky. Kennedy Jones asked him what sort of a man his reverend host of the evening was.

"Faith," said the barber, "he is a splendid man, a right-minded, pious, upright, Christian gentleman. More betoken, he reformed me, though you would be hard set to think I needed reforming to look at me. But I used to be the deplorablest character in the town. Up nearly every week before

the Bench, and fined for being drunk and fighting the police and every man I met when the drink was in me. The canon came to me, 'Faherty,' says he to me, 'if you must get drunk, will you not go blazing all over the town fighting and making disturbances. Can't you, for God's sake, bring the drink up to your own room, and get drunk quiet, respectable and decent by yourself, where no man can interfere with you, and no one can point the finger of scorn at you?' I took his advice, and it has made me what I am, and what you see me now. I am a dacent member of society now, and I am able to get drunk without a stain on my character as often as ever I like."

"There now," said Kennedy Jones, "there's nice Christian teaching for you," and as the reformed character had ended his hair-cutting operations by snipping a bit off the top of Kennedy Jones's ear, there may perhaps have been a little personal feeling over his remarkable reform.

CHAPTER XXXIV

THE SINN FEIN RESURRECTION

WITH the election of 1918 the old Irish party were almost completely wiped out. They certainly had done well for the country, as the record of the beneficent measures the Government had passed for Ireland during the last forty years under their influence was a standing argument for the continuance of the Union; and it is sad to think, when one looks at England's great navy and colonial possessions, that the southern Irish are hereafter to be shut out from taking any part in the councils of this great Empire. The Irish members were good fellows on the whole, and while they had to attack the Local Government Board with apparent ferocity in order to placate the local authorities who were under the board's control, they were never personally offensive to me, with a few exceptions.

One instance of the attacks upon the board in Parliament is always an amusing recollection for me. There was a soft-voiced gentleman from Louth, who was very grateful to me because I promised a deputation from Drogheda, introduced by him, to give them a grant from the Unemployment Fund for work at their reservoir, and because I informed the deputation that it was entirely owing to their member's able advocacy and his irresistible

arguments that I was convinced of the necessity for this work. I always tried to give members of Parliament of every political persuasion a lift with their constituents when I could. After the deputation had left, the secretary, passing my room, looked in to tell me that the deputation were tremendously pleased and were patting the M.P. on the back and wringing his hand. Shortly afterwards the latter slipped back on tiptoe to tell me that I really had done him more service than he could explain, and that, if ever a word was said in the House of Commons about the Local Government Board, he would give me an eulogium which would surprise me. He did, two days afterwards, and I am bound to say it surprised me very much indeed. Our vote was on in the House on the occasion, and I was sitting under the gallery listening to my board getting the usual hammering from member after member. Bradbury of the Treasury, who had looked in, said to me: "You seem to be getting it pretty hot," and just at that moment I saw my Louth friend on his feet, so I said to Bradbury: "They don't really mean it; you listen to this gentleman, he is not afraid to say what he really thinks. He'll put rather a different aspect upon the board's administration."

"Mr. Speaker, Sir," said the gentleman from Louth in his soft voice, "I will not join in the attack upon the Local Government Board. I will not waste the time of this House with recriminations and abuse of the Local Government Board, and I'll tell you why, Sir: it is because to abuse the Local Government Board"—and then he looked

round rather nervously—"is like throwing water on a drowned rat," and with that he sat down! He had started with the best intentions, but his heart had failed him at the last moment when he saw the amazed glances of his colleagues, and he adroitly saved himself from his *faux pas* in this way.

It was part of the pledge of the Irish members that they would never take or ask any favour or office for themselves or their friends till they had got a Government of their own, and while this pledge was most strictly observed by the old Nationalists like the Redmonds, Dillon, Esmonde, and Healy, the more recent additions to the party, especially the representatives of the Ancient Order of Hibernians, worked like blacks for their friends. However, those who wrote to me for posts adopted a formula to save their faces, which was something like this. It is, in fact, practically word for word with some letters I received:

DEAR SIR HENRY,

Only that I am pledged not to ask for any favour from the Government, I would be quite unable to resist telling you that Pat Mulloy is one of the best and cleverest friends of mine that ever was a candidate for an inspectorship; but you see how helpless I am to assist the poor boy owing to the pledge, but I know you will consider his case on its merits and see that he gets fair play.

There was one very old, hale and hearty gentleman in the House, an alderman of the City of Dublin, who was very absent-minded, and one day

a pushing young political barrister got him to promise to write to me a strong letter in support of a brother who wanted an inspectorship. To ensure that the alderman would put the application properly, he drafted it himself and wrote :

DEAR ALDERMAN ——,

I think if you write as follows to Sir Henry Robinson it ought to make it all right :

DEAR SIR HENRY,

I hear young Mulligan is an applicant for an inspectorship. He is an excellent young man, and I think, if you appoint him, the Irish Party as a whole will be very pleased and appreciate your friendliness towards their wishes.

Yours sincerely,

Copy this out on House of Commons paper in your own handwriting and send it on to Sir Henry, and I think that will make it all right for the brother.

Yours sincerely,

JOHN MULLIGAN.

The alderman had been dining well when he received this letter by the evening post in the House of Commons, and while it seemed to him to be a very good letter, he did not quite see the necessity for copying it out. It was perfectly legible, he considered. So he took the short course of putting the letter into an envelope just as it was and posted it to me. But evidently it struck him there was something wanting about this, so he wrote in pencil outside the envelope that young Mr. Johnson of

Rathmines (whom I had never heard of before—or since) was a very good man and ought to be made an inspector.

The Sinn Fein campaign grew rapidly worse during Macpherson's regime, and very determined efforts were made to assassinate him and Lord French. Both were rather reckless, Lord French taking long rides about the country with only an A.D.C. and Macpherson going over for the day to Dollymount or Port-Marnock Golf Links without any guard whatever. The attempt on Lord French's life only failed because of the very bad marksmanship of the assailants, who out of a dozen shots or so only hit the driver of the car in the wrist, whereas Lord French's escort picked off one of them, and shot him dead at the first shot.

It is a rather remarkable and inexplicable thing that, although the rank and file of the Republican army shrank from no outrage, they were very nervous and shaky at their raids, and as they were generally attacking unarmed and defenceless people, they did not run much risk. Some of them, indeed, prefaced their outrages and looting by apologetic remarks to the effect that they had to do what they were told.

I heard of one raid at the house of a person of title. They broke into the house, the owner was taken upstairs to show where the arms were, and his wife, a very dignified little lady, was left sitting knitting in her chair in the drawing-room. A man was told off to stand opposite her with a revolver pointed at her, and to shoot her dead if she made any

movement or called out or tried to ring the bell. The little lady continued to knit with perfect *sang froid*, from time to time looking straight at the Republican with an expression of such utter contempt and scorn that he became quite uncomfortable. He cocked and uncocked his revolver and scowled horribly at her, but all to no effect. She worked away with an expression of such disdain that at length he could stand it no longer, and continuing to hold the revolver up to her head, with trembling hand, he said to her in an ingratiating voice, "These are terrible times we are living in now, my lady!"

Brigadier-General Sir Joseph Byrne, who came with a great reputation from the War Office as Inspector-General of the R.I.C., was a great disappointment to Lord French, who thought he lacked initiative and resourcefulness, and that the R.I.C. were losing heart under his leadership. Undoubtedly the R.I.C. were a bit rattled over the cowardly ambushes of the Sinn Feiners, but to find the reason for their lack of energy one should have gone back a long way before Sir Joseph's Byrne's time, to the dismissal of Harrel, Assistant Commissioner of the Dublin Police, over the gun-running incident at Howth. The constabulary and Dublin Metropolitan Police, after the sacrifice of Harrel, lost all confidence in ever being able to depend upon the support of the Liberal Government in emergencies. The officers never knew what view would be taken of their conduct if they got into collision with the people, and were more nervous about Dublin Castle than about the struggle with the Sinn Feiners, and

it is very doubtful whether, even if Byrne had urged them on to the determined fighting which characterized their services under Balfour and Long, they would have accepted his assurance of complete indemnity for any consequences which might follow.

Sir Joseph Byrne was a very able, careful man, determined to do what was right and safe, and the Government were in such a state of exasperation owing to the recurrence of outrages without any of the malefactors being brought to justice, that the kind of man they would really have liked as head of the R.I.C. was not so much a capable, painstaking official like Byrne, but an utterly reckless dare-devil, who would retaliate on the gunmen with all kinds of wild, and even indefensible stunts, and infect the police with the same spirit. They got a real uncompromising fighter later in General Tudor, but when he had got going and was just on the eve of dominating the situation with his "Black and Tans," the Government yielded to the outcry raised for party purposes in Parliament by the Opposition, and they stopped reprisals and retaliation and queered his pitch completely. I was very sorry for Byrne, as it is doubtful if he could have done anything more than he did to stem the Sinn Fein onslaught, and if he erred on the side of caution it is not surprising when he had the fate of W. V. Harrel before him as a warning against official intrepidity. Indeed, had he thrown caution to the winds and run amok among the rebels with his police the probability is that the Cabinet would have wilted under the attacks of the Opposition in Parliament and would have tied his hands also.

Colonel Edgeworth Johnstone, Chief Commissioner of the Dublin Police, had a very galling time likewise when these waves of tense exasperation swept over Dublin Castle. The authorities were rather too prone to show wisdom after the event, and following nefarious acts of the gunmen Johnstone would be sent for and asked to explain why he had not done this, that and the other which might have prevented the outrage (if date, hour and place could have been foreseen!). He seemed invariably to have a good answer, but none the less it was trying him very high, and one used to feel in meeting him and discussing the situation how well he fulfilled the "If" of Rudyard Kipling:

> If you can keep your head when all about you
> Are losing theirs and blaming it on you.

I was always afraid lest following some outrageous coup of the rebels he might have been superseded, and if this had happened the fat would have been in the fire with a vengeance. The D.M.P. were a splendid body of men, with a world-wide reputation for the magnificence of their physique, and they had a profound respect for their herculean chief. He had won the boxing championship of the Army and the amateur championship of England, and his courage and imperturbability put heart into his force; no other could have held them together so well as he, and his departure would have morally broken the force to pieces. However, we were spared this blunder, and he saw the whole campaign through to the end; it is to be hoped that he will get due con-

sideration for his conspicuous services when he retires. Meanwhile Sir Joseph Byrne was superseded, and kept on full pay with indefinite leave of absence; but the change brought no improvement, and rapidly and steadily the campaign of crime and rebellion against the Government increased.

It is better not to enlarge too much on the occurrences during the Sinn Fein campaign, as the leaders are now in power and are doing their best to put an end to the terror of the Irregulars and to restore peace. All the same, however, unless passing reference is made to the outrages preceding the Treaty it is not possible to give a coherent account of the course of events which led Lloyd George's Government to call a truce and yield to the rebels practically everything they asked for.

Macpherson had been through a most trying and strenuous time as Under-Secretary for War since the commencement of hostilities in 1914, and after he had completed the legislative work which he had on hand, his health would not stand the continuation of the strain for a longer period, and he was ordered absolute rest by his medical advisers. It was a marvel how he escaped the determined efforts which were made to assassinate him, as there were such clever spies all round him that it was hard to keep his movements covered up. I heard that when he was leaving Ireland for the last time the people charged to murder him were waiting for him both at Westland Row and at Amiens Street Station, not knowing whether he would go by Belfast or Kingstown. He kept his intentions to himself, and when he drove up to Amiens Street, with that

utter disregard of the convenience of other people with important calls upon their time which is so characteristic of the supercilious Englishman, he hurried through the expectant crowd who were waiting to see the curtain drop upon his career. He pushed on to Larne and so across the water, while his executioners, who had followed him to Belfast by train, were tearing their hair in their fury at being unable to trace his whereabouts in the city.

CHAPTER XXXV

SIR JOHN ANDERSON

HAMAR GREENWOOD was appointed Chief Secretary in place of Ian Macpherson, and some of the brightest ornaments of the English Civil Service and the Army were dispatched to Ireland in the hope that they would be able to cope with the growing seriousness of the position. Sir Neville Macready was appointed Commander-in-Chief of the Forces in place of Sir Frederick Shaw, a bluff, honest, straightforward gentleman whom we all were very sorry to lose. Sir John Anderson was made an additional Under-Secretary, with all the powers of the permanent head of the Treasury so far as Ireland was concerned. Mr. Cope, from some other English department, was made Assistant Under-Secretary, and Mr. Waterfield, from John Barker and Co., who had begun his career in the Treasury, was made Treasury Remembrancer with the powers of Assistant Secretary.

Anderson was beyond all doubt a really great administrator. Once in a blue moon the open competitive examination for the Civil Service brings to light a man of his exceptional type whom no power on earth can prevent from sprinting like a flash to the top of the ladder. I doubt very much, however, whether in the whole history of the British

Civil Service any of these supermen ever had a heavier responsibility thrown on him than Anderson had in taking on the part of Chief of Staff to the English in Ireland at this critical period. It was only a few like myself who obtained passing glimpses of what was going on behind the scenes who could realize the forces he was up against, what between his own parliamentary chiefs and the Press and the public, while always before his eyes was the daily bulletin of disheartening crime and the hopeless outlook for the future. But he stood it with courage and infinite patience; he saw passing events, appalling as they were, in their true proportion to the whole problem, and he never appeared to be unduly cast down or uplifted over the day's work. His presence was so constantly required in London that he had to give Waterfield a very free hand in Treasury matters, and to leave the normal work of administration to MacMahon, Cope and Mark Sturgis. But all the same he was captain of the ship in more than name, and his final word on any subject went, and when the vessel was having a bad time among the shoals and breakers he was always to be found on the bridge with his hand on the engine-room telegraph.

It was rather an unfortunate thing that Waterfield and his staff, who had no experience of what the Irish civil servants had been through and no concern with what was before them, should have been sent over to Ireland with so free a hand. All the public departments had already been cut to the bone in pursuance of Treasury circulars on war economies, and the civil servants who had spent

the best part of their lives in the service of England, had hoped for some sympathy and protection from the British Treasury when matters came to be wound up, whereas, on the contrary, they now found themselves down and out, faced with the new peril of being at the mercy of soulless young Englishmen bent on further retrenchments at all hazards, who seemed to think the Irish civil servants had little to complain about if they were not thrown penniless into the street.

What was additionally galling about it was that the imported English civil servants were given substantial salaries and special "danger allowances," and were surrounded day and night by barbed wire, sandbags and guards. On the other hand, the Irish officials, especially those who had to work in the open country unprotected and alone—such as the resident magistrates, who had frequently to sentence Sinn Fein prisoners, and the Local Government Board officials, who were prevented by violence and threats from fulfilling their duties—received no similar consideration, while applications for recasting their salaries or allowances on the faith of promises made, or increased cost of living and locomotion, were to all intents and purposes ignored.

CHAPTER XXXVI

THE "BLACK AND TANS"

IN Sir Hamar Greenwood I found a cheery, agreeable and energetic chief, with a good deal of personal courage in face of the risks he ran. The changes in his outlook on the situation were, however, very rapid. He came over with the evident belief that, as a colonial and naturally a firm adherent to the principle of self-government, the Irish people would not regard him with the same aversion as the average English Chief Secretary is regarded, but for all the difference his colonial breeding made in the eyes of the Republicans he might just as well have been the King of the Cannibal Islands. His illusions were quickly dispelled, and he became so strong a supporter of the police and resident magistrates at first that I could not help feeling that, if he had been a rich independent man whose parliamentary career meant so little to him that he would do exactly what he believed to be right or resign, he would have fought it out and ended the war without any of the humiliation of the Government which accompanied the Truce. But he very soon succumbed to the outcry against the "Black and Tans." Although, to use an Irish metaphor, he "splashed and dashed and crashed and squandered his carcass" in the House of Commons in his impotent wrath over the crimes of the

Republican campaign, he upheld his party's policy and rang off the "Black and Tans" at the psychological moment when they had established a reign of terror of their own which bid fair to take all the heart out of the Sinn Fein, and which must have been giving them the worst and most anxious time they had ever put in since the rebellion.

They were a light-hearted, reckless set of men these "Black and Tans," mostly ex-officers, and some of their humorous stunts really exasperated people almost more than the reprisals. As an example of their humour, one of our inspectors told me that in driving through some southern town he was amazed to see painted up in enormous letters along the whole front of a public-house belonging to the leading Sinn Feiner the words: "God save the King," and underneath "God bless the Black and Tans." He asked the driver about it, who said:

"Well, sir, it was the way the Black and Tans came to Mr. Murphy about some devilment he was said to be mixed up in, and he was greatly afeared that they would burn his house, and he let on that he was no Sinn Feiner and had a great wish for the Black and Tans. 'Well,' says they, 'if ye have, ye had better set a good example and have your good wishes for us painted up on your house to-night the way the people will see that you are a decent man, and,' says they, mighty serious, 'it might be as well if they were put on the front wall of your house to-morrow morning, or maybe there might not be any front wall to paint them on the following night.' So the poor fellow had to

gather workmen and keep them going all through the night till he had the words which they gave him on a slip of paper painted up."

So the public-house was saved at the cost of the owner's self-respect.

Another instance of the humour of the "Black and Tans" was told me by a lady travelling in Westmeath. She met a prominent Nationalist she knew very well, and said to him:

"Well, Mr. Dempsey, how are you getting on these bad times?"

"Oh, begorra, miss," he said, "things is awful with them blackguard Black and Tans driving and drinking all over the country, threatening the lives of the people, so they are."

"Oh," said she, "but their great consumption of drink ought to be rather a good thing for you, with that splendid corner house of yours."

"Arrah, sure I would not be allowed to serve them," he said, in an awestruck voice, "sure the house would be pulled down about my head by Sinn Feiners if I did."

"That's hard lines," said the lady; "so they cannot get any drink at your place at all?"

"Well, I would not say that altogether," said Mr. Dempsey; "for they come into my bar and they call for what they want, and then they start rolling their little bombs up and down the counter till they get anything they ax for. Sure, if one of them bombs was to drop the whole village would be wiped out, so what can I do?"

Just one other instance of "Black and Tan" humour. A certain Secret Service man who had

been engaged upon most important work, and who had evidence which would have been sufficient to hang some Sinn Feiners, had to be brought over from England in connexion with some very serious murder cases near Dundalk; although it was known that the Sinn Fein Intelligence Department were desperately anxious to get him into their clutches, there was no way of dispensing with his attendance, and the "Black and Tans" were warned they were to take no chances with regard to his safety. Accordingly a good force of auxiliaries and police met the boat, and the moment the gangway was run out they were on board and surrounded the cabin which contained the Intelligence Officer. The people of this little port were all very strong Sinn Feiners, and seeing the large force of police at the pier they all made for the boat to see who was coming over. It was observed then that the cabin-door opened and a red-faced gentleman, handcuffed and tied, was dragged out of his cabin by the police, protesting violently and struggling. Finally the officer of the police, after some minutes' talk with him, gave word to the men, and the handcuffs were removed and the prisoner quieted down. But, instead of being shut in a carriage he was put into the tender behind the engine—which had very little coal, so that there was room for him—with the police grouped round him, as though to guard him better than in an enclosed carriage.

"Who is he, who is he?" the people were asking each other in great excitement. It was clear to them that he was some very important Sinn Feiner, owing to the handcuffing and the shaking he got

from the police, and in their enthusiasm, they dashed off to the shop and returned with their arms full of cigarettes, chocolates, cakes and oranges, which they threw to him, all the time calling out, "Who are you, tell us now." But they saw the police were warning him not to open his lips, and he made no move except by some unintelligible signs. Finally, when there was a perfect stack of cigarettes and chocolate boxes round him, and the engine began to pull out of the station, the crowd rushed alongside saying: "Tell us who ye are; don't mind the police, shout it out." At last, when the speed of the engine was such that they were obliged to drop off, the red-faced gentleman stood up, leaning over the side, and shouted: "I am Terence MacSwiney from Cork." Poor Terence MacSwiney was, at that time, doing about his fiftieth day of hunger-strike, and the roars of laughter of the "Black and Tans" over the announcement that their fat, red-faced Intelligence Officer was the hunger-striker, revealed the fact to the people that they had been sold.

General Tudor, who, as police adviser, ran the whole police force, was a most intrepid and resourceful soldier, and he seemed to be rapidly gaining the upper hand in 1921. The two factors in the situation in his favour were that his Intelligence Branch had become extraordinarily good and that the Sinn Feiners at the time were known to be in great and increasing straits about ammunition. Had we been allowed to carry on till he dominated the situation by force of arms the probability is that when the Treaty had been

offered by the Government as a final settlement, it would have been accepted by all sections of the people in Southern Ireland with joy and relief. Further, the insane idea which is now wrecking the country, that by a further orgy of murder and destruction the Government could be forced into conceding to Ireland a separate and independent republic, would never have been entertained. But the "Black and Tans" were hard to keep in hand, and some of their reprisals in the South frightened peace-loving English people who heard nothing of the true facts of the Sinn Fein reprisals, as the Press propaganda on the side of Sinn Fein was clever, while the Government Press work was wretched.

So the "Black and Tans" had their teeth drawn, and it was a marvel to all who knew with what the R.I.C. were faced how they stood the constant strain of being ambushed when together, and shot at when alone, or home on their holidays, while every attempt to pay their opponents in their own coin was discountenanced by the Government. As days went on the ghastly column in the morning papers of the day's outrages grew longer and longer, as the life of everyone specially concerned in the prevention and detection of crime was practically declared to be forfeit by the Sinn Feiners. It was an unfortunate thing that many officers of the R.I.C. and resident magistrates, while realizing the risks they ran, were under a delusion that because they were personally popular with the people they would not be assassinated.

Poor Alan Bell, the resident magistrate, took up

his duties in Dublin Castle, and would insist on living outside this protected area, despite the strong protest of Lord French. Lord French was greatly concerned for his safety, and suggested to him that if he would not live in the Castle he might come and live at the Viceregal Lodge, which was impenetrable by the rebels. He begged him to do so and to bring his wife, and said they should have a sitting-room of their own, and could make it their temporary home, could have their meals in it whenever they did not feel equal to dinner parties. However, Bell said that while deeply grateful he thought he would be quite safe at Monkstown, and rather than be shut up as a prisoner he would prefer to live outside, even though he might be under some risks.

He went backwards and forwards from his home at Monkstown to the Castle each morning until the fatal day, when he was dragged from his seat in a tram by half a dozen men, who flung him down on the road and poured bullets into him until he was dead, after which the murderers sauntered away.

Roberts, the Assistant Inspector-General of the R.I.C., was another who was so familiarized with death that he had come to think that whatever might happen to others it would pass him by. But he had a narrow escape. He observed a crowd under the railway arches at the Custom House when motoring in from his home at Howth one morning. If he had thought for a moment he would have avoided the crowd, as it was usually arranged that when a murder was to take place a crowd should assemble at the scene, so that the murderers could mingle with the throng the moment after the shots

were fired and so escape. As Roberts drove under the railway arch there was a man on the line overhead, who dropped a bomb down over him, but it missed the car by twenty feet. Roberts told me that after this explosion he seemed to hear a noise as if all the tyres in the world were bursting around him, and the next moment, as he thought, he found himself to his bewilderment in bed in a strange room with something tied round his head, and feeling rather sick. But in reality forty-eight hours had elapsed since he heard the shots, during which time he had been wholly unconscious; and this is what happened in the interval. After escaping the bomb a very heavy fire was opened on him from people in the crowd. One bullet hit him a glancing blow on the head and passed round his temple without smashing his skull, rendering him unconscious; his body fell across the police chauffeur, who was himself wounded in the arm and leg, and could neither apply the brakes, change the speed nor switch off the engine. He had one hand to steer by, and this he had also to put round his officer to hold him up; thus encumbered and unable to moderate the speed of the car he drove along through the traffic, bleeding profusely, avoiding collisions with marvellous luck and skill. He charged down Dame Street, cutting out trams and other vehicles, and his one fear was that the Castle gates would be shut. But swinging round from Dame Street to the Castle he saw to his joy that they were open for a moment to let a car out, and darting in he turned his car up to the right and quenched its speed on the sharp hill to the upper yard.

CHAPTER XXXVII

PERSONAL RISKS

IT was difficult to say who really was safe in those days. As I was constantly being summoned to the Park Lodge to see Lord French or the Chief Secretary, and was in daily touch with the Castle, I certainly thought it quite probable that the Sinn Feiners would consider it a sound precaution to remove me on the grounds that I was in the confidence of Lord French and the Government. But as I had never been molested I assumed that they were well aware that my advice would not be asked in connexion with military or police matters, and that my business had to do only with Local Government administration and the relief of unemployment. I asked a legal friend, who I knew was in touch with the militant Sinn Fein, to find out if they intended to wipe me out, and he subsequently told me that, so far as he could ascertain, he thought not, so long as I was not appointed Under-Secretary, but that circumstances changed very rapidly, and I should try and avoid the Castle and the Chief Secretary's lodge.

This, however, was not possible, and one day the police found a notice posted on the door of the Custom House: "Sir Henry Robinson, you are doomed. Prepare for death." This was brought by the police to Colonel Edgeworth Johnstone, their

Chief Commissioner, who thereafter insisted upon my being protected in the streets of Dublin. Wherever I went I was followed by two D.M.P. men in mufti; splendid creatures they were, about six feet two in height, each of them so straight and well set up that no one could have suspected them of being anything but military or police. This protection sometimes led to awkward consequences.

On one occasion a secretary of a county council came up from the south specially to see me about getting his pension awarded by the Local Government Board. He happened to notice me walking down Dawson Street when he was passing up on the opposite side, but he did not observe my protectors. A tram was on the road between us, and when it passed he darted across the road after me and stretched out his hand to touch me on the shoulder, when, to his horror and amazement, he found himself caught by the throat looking down the barrel of a revolver! I was quite oblivious to all this, as it took place behind my back. I went on to the Kildare Street Club to have tea, and a short time afterwards in came the county secretary to the hall, trembling like an aspen leaf and explaining to everyone that it was only by the blessing of Providence that his soul was not at that moment ascending the Golden Stair.

When I had to visit the West of Ireland I thought my protectors could be dispensed with, as I was on a charitable mission to people in the mountain villages of County Galway, for whom I had been able to do a great deal of service one way and another. I was personally acquainted with

them all, and knew I was safe with them, but Colonel Johnstone said there was a dangerous crowd hanging round Galway town, and they might follow me up if they wanted to do something spectacular in the way of removing important officials. I felt quite ashamed at arriving in Connemara, among all my village friends, with police protection; so, to save my face, I gave out in the hotel that they were two engineers of the Local Government Board who had come about my roads and works; at the same time, I enjoined them to look the part as much as possible.

We visited the new roads, and my two "engineers" examined the culverts and looked very wise and critical, and all went well till the Catholic curate, who was building a little church by direct labour with an occasional visit from a Galway architect, heard that "Misther Sir Henry"—as the people of the district called me—had arrived on the limited mail with two engineers. The opportunity was too good to be lost, as the curate was rather unhappy as to the strength and foundations of his walls, so he came to the hotel while I happened to be out, asked to see the engineers, and begged them to come and see the church and give him their opinion as to the stability or otherwise of the walls. Both of them professed their willingness to go, and in view of the part they were playing declared that they had been dealing with walls for the last forty years (their ages are about twenty-five to twenty-eight), and they would give him their opinion with a heart and a half.

I came in afterwards and was horrified to learn

that my two protectors were away giving architectural advice about the church. However, they came back soon afterwards, and declared that the curate was mighty thankful for the help they gave him. A local contractor happened to be with the curate, and I think he had formed a pretty shrewd opinion as to the true calling of my gladiators, for he told me afterwards what took place. The curate showed the building to the "engineers," who listened with great solemnity to what he had to say, and the sergeant as spokesman ultimately delivered the expert judgment.

"Look here now, the walls *might* be strong enough, and again they might not, and this is what ye'll do. Let them stop up now as they are for the winter months, and if the gale blows them down then they aren't strong enough, and ye can build them up again only twice as strong, but if they are able to stand up agen the winter gales then ye can slap the roof on them when the spring comes in, and you'll be all serene."

After a while I dispensed with my protectors, as I was convinced that they were a challenge rather than a protection. In the first place, if I had been shot in the streets they could only have slain my adversaries, which would not have been much help to me. Secondly, I had sufficient knowledge of Sinn Fein discipline to know that if it was decided that I was to be removed protection during part of the day, such as I was getting, would have been of very little use, as I could have been caught at my home in Foxrock or when driving in and out of Dublin. Moreover, I got a hint from a Sinn Feiner

who was friendly to me that any official followed by two detectives, as I was, offered such a perfect pot shot to anyone going about with a revolver eating its head off in his pocket, that flesh and blood could hardly resist the temptation. I ought to remember, he said, that the most well-meaning and decent Sinn Feiner was only human after all.

At the same time, the fact that the Local Government Board was at war with the local authorities was rather ominous and disquieting. The local authorities had all been ordered to swear allegiance to Sinn Fein and to refuse to recognize the authority of the Local Government Board; not to submit their accounts for audit or to allow the Government inspectors to visit the workhouses or see any official documents. We made no countermove at first, hoping that, as the councils were still corresponding with us and could not legally borrow money without our consent or make valid appointments, this attitude towards us was only a passing phase, which would end when Treasury advances were required for housing of the working classes or feeding school children or relief of unemployment. We therefore thought we would leave it at that for a while, in the hope that the hanging up of all these loans would convince the local authorities that there was nothing to be gained by refusing to allow the ratepayers the protection of an audit. But, in the meantime, when our vote came up before the House of Commons, some member of Parliament asked the Prime Minister whether large grants of public money were being given to local authorities who refused to account for them to the Local Government Board

or to recognize the authority of the British Parliament. The answer was an apologetic affirmative as regards the past, but, so far as future grants of public money were concerned, Mr. Bonar Law gave the House a positive undertaking that not one penny of public money, either by way of grant or loan, would be given to local authorities which would not agree hereafter to account for them and submit their accounts for the statutory audit. I was warned that strict observance of this pledge would be required, and that a circular must be sent to the county and district councils by the board informing them that all public moneys would be withheld unless and until the councils would give the board an assurance that they would allow the audit to take place.

In an article in *Blackwood's Magazine*, on the last days of Dublin Castle, there is a most inane and erroneous reference to the withdrawal of the grants. It is stated that Sir John Anderson had been influenced to take this step entirely by me, and that I, being under the delusion that the Local Government system was the hub of the Irish universe, had persuaded Anderson that under this threat of stoppage of grants the local authorities would give way and forswear allegiance to the Sinn Fein and come back to the fold. If the other statements in the *Blackwood* article are on a par with this one in point of accuracy it would scarcely repay perusal by any seeker after truth; neither Anderson nor I had any more to do with initiating the policy of withholding the grants than the Man in the Moon. It was very doubtful whether the grants were payable at all if the statutory audit was not held.

Subsequently an Act was introduced enabling the Government to apply these grants, when not paid to the local authorities owing to their default, towards compensation to the families of murdered police officers, pending the making of the Malicious Injury Rate for the purpose.

The withholding of the grants which were in relief of taxation was felt to be very hard on the loyal ratepayers, and it was urged upon Sir Hamar Greenwood that before depriving them of this relief to which they were entitled the Local Government Board should take all means open to them within the law to compel the local authorities to submit their accounts. The Government could not refuse this, and we were directed to endeavour, by a mandamus, to compel the local authorities to submit their accounts, and so enable the ratepayers to obtain the benefit of the grants.

We took proceedings in the High Court against about eighty of them. It turned out a very costly proceeding, and the delays were interminable, as there was so much difficulty in serving the conditional orders, and the orders when made absolute, upon the special defendants. When matters were ripe for an application to the Court to bring up the special defendants for contempt and to inflict fine or imprisonment or some other punishment upon them unless they agreed to the audit, the truce was declared, and the Local Government Board was handed over to Sinn Fein, and all proceedings against the Sinn Fein councils were of course abandoned.

CHAPTER XXXVIII

BURNING OF THE CUSTOM HOUSE

PROBABLY the stupidest thing the Sinn Fein ever did was the burning of the Custom House. There were paints and pictures of this beautiful historic building all over the world as an example of architectural beauty, in which every Irishman took a just pride. To this day I have never discovered why it was burnt, as its destruction was nothing more than an inconvenience to the Local Government Board. The office work went on in other buildings at 10 o'clock next morning; there was no deadlock in the work, which no doubt was what they hoped for, and for every paper of value destroyed there were about a ton of others which were valuable only as records of the past, and never would be required again. The vouchers for expenditure with which we had to satisfy the Treasury and the Auditor-General disappeared, but this only relieved us from the trouble of submitting them. The Inland Revenue Department were put to a good deal of inconvenience, but so far as the Sinn Fein cause being advantaged by this it was not brought one step nearer to its objective, and they are feeling now the difficulties in recovering taxes and death duties, owing to the loss of some of these records.

With my usual good luck I was not in the

office at the time of the burning. I had for years past offered a silver cup for a golf competition to men of the staff. It had been my practice to be present at the finals and to ask the finalists to lunch with me at Dollymount, so at about five minutes to one I left the office to see the final played off, and met the competitors just as they were coming up to the fourteenth green in the first round. We heard a rattle of machine-gun fire over Dublin, but as this was nothing unusual we thought little of it. Soon we saw a very heavy pall of smoke rising in the direction of Amiens Street, and then more machine-gun fire, and it entered into our minds that, as Ulster had just started its new government, Amiens Street terminus was being set on fire as a protest against the partition of Ireland.

However, when we got in to lunch I heard one of the competitors holding an animated colloquy on the telephone. He had been doing very well in the first round, and to him the possession of the cup was the first consideration in the world at the time, and this is what I heard: "Burnt down, do you say? . . . Burnt to the ground! What! papers and everything? . . . Anybody hurt? . . . Through the arm? . . . Well, look here, is the cup all right? . . . Thank God!" Turning to me and to others who were listening, he said: "The Custom House has been burnt to the ground and nearly everything in it is burnt, but the cup is safe. They have got it away. By Gad! I got a great start, I thought it was gone."

If I had been five minutes later in leaving that

morning I should have shared the risks of the rest of the staff. At one o'clock men armed with revolvers went into the rooms and ordered the staff to clear out into the passages below, as the place was going to be burnt. Petrol was then slushed all over the rooms and the place was soon ablaze; women and men clerks were all huddled together in the stone passages on the ground floor. The incendiaries had evidently calculated that at least half an hour must elapse before the military could hear of it and come on the scene, and if they cleared out before then they would be safe. To their horror and dismay, scarcely ten minutes had passed after their entry when they heard firing in the streets on all sides. What had happened was that a policeman was passing the Custom House on his bicycle at 1 o'clock and heard that the Sinn Feiners had just taken possession of it. Sprinting on to the Lower Castle Yard he gave his information to a company of "Black and Tans" who happened to be at their lunch with a Crossley lorry outside. Seizing their arms and leaving their lunch these seventeen men drove like wildfire to the Custom House and surrounded it, leading off with a few shots at the doors of the building. The Sinn Feiners inside rushed to the iron doors and opened a chink to look out, and were horrified to be met with a hot rifle fire. The same thing happened at every door they opened, and they found themselves caught like rats in a trap. Coming back again to where the staff and their friends were assembled, they were in a desperate state of alarm. They turned on their

officers and upbraided them, saying: "You have got us into this and you have got to get us out of it. What are we to do?" They were crying and cursing and making such an exhibition of themselves that some of our lady typists felt quite sorry for them.

While this was going on the military reinforcements called up by telephone had come on the scene. They swarmed over the roof of the building and a hot firing took place between them and the Sinn Feiners. Many of the Sinn Feiners were killed and wounded, one or two civil servants were hit, and one of them killed. The Sinn Feiners speedily surrendered, but as the fire was blazing fiercely it was too late to save the building, especially as the fire brigade had been held up by Sinn Feiners. The military soon rounded up the Sinn Fein prisoners and the officials from the public offices, and the assistant secretary of the Local Government Board was called upon to identify those who belonged to the office. These were sent out under guard to take shelter under the wall opposite, while those who were not identified were taken prisoners.

Sir George Vanston, our legal adviser, had rather a curious experience. The Sinn Feiners for some reason overlooked his room. He is quite deaf, so he never heard the firing going on, and he was working away while the place was burning fiercely and bombs and machine-guns keeping up a fearful din outside prior to the surrender. At 1.30 he rang for a messenger to bring him up some lunch; getting no reply, in five minutes he

rang again. Once more he rang, and this time, being very angry, seized his hat and went down the corridor to look for a messenger. He ran into the arms of a military officer who was searching the stone corridors for hidden Sinn Feiners. Vanston shouted out he was the board's legal adviser, but the officer would not let him go, and grabbing him by the arm took him round by the back door to make him line up with the others under Brooke Thomas & Company's walls. However, when they were nearing the door Vanston perceived from the heat and the smoke that something uncanny had been happening, and turning to the officer he shouted at him: "Has there been any firing going on?" "I thought he looked very queerly at me," said Vanston, describing his experience to me afterwards; "but anyway he pushed me out into the street and let me go."

The officer, I heard afterwards, was so amazed at Vanston's question that he thought his mind had given way under the shock and excitement, and as he did not want to be saddled with the care of a lunatic he turned him out into the street.

It was a lamentable thing that we never could persuade the military to place a regular guard on the Custom House while things were at their worst. Although we did not anticipate that it would be burnt down I had been warned, from a source from which I had usually obtained sound advice, that a raid on the office and the destruction of books and records was more than probable, and that the Inland Revenue, which had documents of great value in the offices next to us,

were likely to be raided at the same time. Finally, my representations to the military regarding the definite warning I had received bore fruit, and, after a while, two officers from headquarters came to see me and made a careful survey of the building and ordered all the doors to be kept closed except one, which was to serve every department in the building for entry and exit. They then arranged for guards at certain points of the building on an admirably conceived plan, which would have enabled them, with very few men, to hold the building against any force. But, after the guard had been there for about a fortnight, without a word of explanation to me, it was withdrawn, and so, when the incendiaries came later with their wagon-load of petrol and bales of cotton waste, they found no one in the place to stop them from deliberately burning it down, at 1 o'clock in broad daylight.

The destruction of the Custom House proved the undoing of our assistant secretary Mr. Leach, a very loyal gentleman. When the Sinn Feiners were surrounded by the military and paraded with the civil servants after the fire they all claimed to be members of the staff of the Local Government Board, and the assistant secretary was called upon by the military to verify this. Mr. Leach pointed out to the military those who really were members of the staff, and denied all knowledge of the others, who were, accordingly, marched off as prisoners. The following morning Colonel Johnstone sent me an urgent message to get Leach out of the country at once, as the Sinn

Feiners were looking for him, and were determined to shoot him at sight for having failed to perjure himself on behalf of the Sinn Fein prisoners who had alleged that they were officials of the board. Leach was a highly strung, excitable man, and I did not want to frighten him by telling him plump outright that his life was in danger, but without doing so I managed to persuade him that he ought to take a holiday in England and to take it soon, as one never could tell whether the Sinn Feiners might not bear him malice over the duty he had been called upon to discharge. He agreed that it was unwise to run risks, and he went to London that night, but on arriving the Scotland Yard people met him and did not mince matters. Their information was that men were following him, and he must move from place to place, never stopping for two nights in the same house, and must put all idea of returning home to Ireland out of his head.

This was a serious thing for him, as he had to sell his house at a loss and give up his appointment, and had very heavy expenses in moving his family about in England. He had a bad nervous breakdown, and financially he was very hard hit, as the Treasury gave him a retiring allowance which did not nearly compensate him for the loss of income and the out-of-pocket expenses he had incurred.

There was a gang of men travelling about England at this time making sudden descents upon different localities where they heard that Irish officials and police were spending their holi-

days, knocking at the doors and asking to see them, shooting them if they came out, and then getting on their car and driving off. It was rather a risky business for them, as they had not a terrorized public to shelter them as in Ireland, and they could not stay in or near any town where these murders were attempted.

A curious incident came to my personal notice. A man called at some rooms in London where my son, Bryan, sometimes stays, and asked if he was in. The maid said, "No; he had gone home." He asked where, and she unsuspectingly gave him the address. Then the man said he supposed that Sir Henry Robinson was with him, as he was in England on holidays just now. The maid said she did not know. I was staying for a couple of days at an hotel in the country, to be near my son who had a farm outside the town, and the evening after I left four men came, at 11 o'clock at night, to the hotel where I had been stopping and knocked at the door.

The landlord had gone to bed, and instead of coming downstairs and opening the door, he looked out of the window and asked who it was. They answered him, he said, in a "strange accent," and told him they were travellers and wanted to stop for the night. He asked where they came from, but they were rather peremptory and objected to being kept talking out in the cold, and ordered him to come down at once and let them in. He was rather nettled at this, and said he would not let them in at that time of night. They said he must do so; it was a public hotel.

Then he told them that he did not let in casual strangers in the middle of the night if he was uncertain about them, and they must go to the police, and if the police would answer for them and satisfy him that they were respectable travellers he would let them in. Meanwhile, he said, he would telephone to the police and tell them to be prepared. At this the four men mounted their car and drove off, and he heard no more of them. The following day the telegraph wires were found cut round the town, and I have rather an uneasy suspicion that I may have had a narrow escape.

CHAPTER XXXIX

THE SURRENDER

SOON after Hamar Greenwood's arrival a strong impression prevailed among the loyalists in Ireland that the dismissal of Taylor and the importation of Anderson, Cope and the English staff portended that the Government had come to the conclusion that some means or other must be found for putting an end to this struggle, and that these English gentlemen had come over to review the situation, and to placate Sinn Fein and try to prepare the way for Home Rule. The notion was sedulously circulated that if the Sinn Feiners would lay down their arms and promise to be good boys and come to terms they could get practically everything they wanted, and that they would find the minds of the English officials receptive to any suggestions they might advance on the subject.

The Government were plainly worried to death over the way the fight was dragging on; it was said that the Sinn Feiners had given Lloyd George a bad fright at Chequers, and that he and some other Ministers were scared lest they might be shot in England by some Irish fanatics. Sinn Fein knew they had won, not by feats of arms but chiefly by the success of their English supporters in Parliament and the Press

in raising an outcry over the counter-offensive of the "Black and Tans," and forcing the Government to muzzle them and put an end to their methods of attack, thereby throwing them back to ordinary police methods of dealing with crime, so futile against the warfare of the Sinn Fein. All this Radical backing had given the Sinn Feiners a certain prospect of victory, if they kept up the fight. They knew they had but to say the word and the Government would have met them to any extent short of actual separation.

The question will naturally be asked, why, if the Sinn Feiners could have got these terms earlier, they did not do so? The reason, I really believe, is that, for their own purposes—sentimental and historic—the victory would have been valueless unless it were accompanied by some kind of humiliation of the English. For the Irishmen abroad and at home this was essential to an acceptable truce.

Peace, it was admitted, would have been a very good thing, but for the Sinn Fein to ask for it, to approach the Government with any manifest desire on their part to cease hostilities, or to admit that there was a drawn battle, or anything less than a success of the Irish Republican Army, or to let it appear that England had beaten them and then come out in the light of a benefactor or a courageous foe generously conceding the boon of self-government to Ireland, was not to be thought of, and the murders and ambushes must go on till the truce was asked for by the British. It must be dragged out of them. England must be down on

her knees, played out, begging them to accept their offer, or it was not a victory such as would cover Sinn Fein with glory and afford a plea of justification for the lengths they had gone in murder and outrage.

And so, when the English contingent settled down to work, and the hints got out that any proposals on the part of Sinn Fein to turn over a new leaf would be substantially rewarded, they found no response in Sinn Fein ranks; on the contrary, acting on the principle of striking while the iron was hot, the outrages increased in intensity. The murder of Frank Brooke in his office, the long, sad procession of coffins covered with flags, winding through the streets, with the remains of poor young soldiers shot in their beds or dressing-rooms before their wives in the early mornings, these horrors left the pacificators no chance of initiating a move in the direction of peace. The malefactors had to be pursued, and the questions in the House as to what steps were being taken to bring the murderers to justice had to be answered, so all the peacemakers could do, while the search for the murderers went on, was to let it be understood that England was still prepared to meet them if they would come to terms. With Cope as intermediary negotiations went on *sub rosa*, but there was no waning of the dreadful lootings and ambushes and murders of the unarmed.

The Sinn Feiners were right in their estimate of the *moral* of the Coalition Government, and at last, hat in hand so to speak, the offer for

peace came from Lloyd George himself. The Truce was declared, the government of the country was handed over to Sinn Fein, and, to use the words of the victors' proclamation in the Press, "Dublin Castle surrendered at 2.30 this day to the Irish Republican Forces."

CHAPTER XL

THE CHANGE-OVER

IT is sad to think of the brave young lives which have been sacrificed and which might have been saved if the Government had made their offer of peace immediately they found they could not support the "Black and Tans" against the Radical outcry, and were not prepared to go through with the subjugation of the rebels a second time. It is even sadder to think that a Prime Minister of England should openly avow that the act of his life in which he takes the greatest pride is this Peace which now leaves the country at the mercy of armed marauders who spare neither man, woman, nor child, who lay waste the country, burn and pillage the houses of the loyalists, rape their women, and shoot unarmed, defenceless men at sight.

One hears the Government apologists ask what alternative was open to them short of a war of extermination. The country was no doubt unprepared for this, but one might have thought that, as the Government disarmed the whole of the loyal and law-abiding people and debarred these unfortunates from taking measures to protect themselves, they ought to have left sufficient police and military in the country to protect them until it was clear that the Free State Govern-

ment were in a position to do so. But day after day the robbery, murder and arson went on, before the Free State Army were able to organize a sufficient defence force to cope with the rebels. We, who suffered, felt very bitterly that, if the Government must stand aside and give us no succour in our danger and tribulation, they might at least keep silent over the pride and honour which they declare they have gained, until this Peace, which is drowned in the blood and tears of the defenceless loyalists, is replaced by a peace of civilization and Christianity.

But I am afraid I have overshot the sequence of events. Mr. Lloyd George's reference at Leeds to the glorious peace he had brought to Ireland, coming just when my house had been broken into by armed Irregulars, who opened fire upon me and my family and looted everything they wanted; all this, and the news I have just received of the murder of two unarmed neighbours without warning at their own doors, makes Lloyd George's jubilation rather hard to bear, and I must now return to my story.

On the day fixed for the surrender of the Government to Sinn Fein I received a telephone message to attend at the Council to be introduced to the victors. I found on arriving there all the heads of departments sitting on one side of the Under-Secretary's room and the Sinn Fein leaders sitting opposite, glowering at each other. I did not join the glad throng, and went out into the corridor, where I was followed by Mr. Justice Wylie, who I suspect found it anything but pleasant

to be confronted with the new Ministers, most of whom he had prosecuted when Solicitor-General for various offences in connexion with the rebellion. Inside the Privy Council Chamber Lord FitzAlan was making the formal abdication of the Irish Government to Michael Collins, and having got through with this he left by the door to the State apartments, and so avoided meeting his trusty and well-beloved civil servants with a *sauve qui peut*, which was the only advice he would have had to offer them. After his departure the Irish Ministers designate were marched into the Council Chamber to join Mr. Collins, and took their seats round the council table. James MacMahon then proceeded to call in all the heads of departments to make them known to their new chiefs, and I, being senior in the service, was called in first and was marched round and introduced to each one in turn, just as a newly sworn privy councillor is presented to the other members of the Council. What struck me most was the extreme youth of most of the new Ministers; they seemed scarcely out of their teens, and all looked pale and anxious. No doubt they had been through a period of terrible anxiety, and they certainly looked gloomy and overpowered with the consciousness of responsibility for the future government of the country. Michael Collins, their spokesman, however, was cordiality itself, and there was none of the "top dog" attitude about him at all events. I was rather amused to hear people asking each other whether the civil servants would be expected to shake hands with men whose hands

were stained with outrage and crime, but, if the civil servants had any doubt on the subject themselves, they were speedily dispelled by Michael Collins, who grasped their hands with his iron grip and shook them warmly with the greatest bonhomie.

A great contrast to the decorum of the attitude of the Ministers towards the officials paraded in the Castle was the ordeal which the police and military were faced with in the country. Jeered at and spat at by the men who had been on the run and for whom they had been looking in connexion with crimes of every kind, what they went through was beyond description. These men did exactly as they liked, incited the people to aggressive demonstration, and any attempt to check them was complained of as being a breach of the Truce. The English soldiers in the streets, too, were laughed at and reviled, coals of fire were piled on the heads of the loyal population, and their sorrow and humiliation was complete. But, of course, it was hardly to be expected that the rank and file of the Sinn Fein followers would take the line of their leaders and refrain from expressing the natural exultation they felt at having their foot on the neck of a beaten foe. Moreover, they probably did not see, as their Ministers did, the troubles and trials that had to be faced in the maintenance of order and discipline among the armed rabble that made up the forces of the Irish Republican Army.

CHAPTER XLI

UNDER THE NEW REGIME

THE new Ministers themselves were able to visualize the gravity of the problems before them. The normal government of the country, which had been built up by years of experience of the people's demands, had been practically brought to a standstill. Local Government administration in particular had been blocked, and the measures for the relief of the sick, the destitute, the children and the unemployed had been suspended, and no alternative measures had taken their place, as the Dail Eireann Local Government Board which had been created had not as yet money to finance new services in place of the old which had been wrecked. The county and district officers, the doctors and relieving officers had been left without pay, and the sick without treatment, as the accommodation in the workhouse buildings had been reduced to an extent which made hospital relief almost inaccessible to the people in many parts of the country. The poor were not paid their outdoor relief in full, the workhouse wards were closed to the infirm, and grants for feeding school children, for tuberculosis treatment, and maternity benefits were all at an end. And so, when the Truce came, there were great hopes that it would mean a resumption of the old bene-

ficent measures for the welfare of the people and the distribution of the usual Treasury grants, if not by the old Local Government Board at all events by a board with the same powers but a different personnel.

The people were woefully disappointed to find that the coming of Home Rule, which was to have strewn the beds of the rivers with gold and to have promoted industries and employment, gave them no immediate relief in their privations. They had been brought up to a most amazing belief in the benefits to be attained by Home Rule.

"Look at the fish, now," an old chairman of a union said to me once. "Sure, they have all left the coast; gone they are, teetotally. Ye don't get the fish now like ye did. I mind the time when you got a big turbot for sixpence. Ah! if we had Home Rule things would be very different. It's then the great fishing ye'd see."

I asked him, suppose a Home Rule Government really did do something to improve the fishing and to provide boats and nets and curing appliances, did he think the fish would come back to the coast? "Why not?" he said.

Everyone appeared to think that whatever their state of life might be they would find it improved under Home Rule. I remember asking a Galway car-driver what he thought would happen under Home Rule, and he assured me I would see "the people all driving about like blazes on side-cars from morning to night, and thim motors all knocked on the head."

Between these two, the expectant, hopeful people, eagerly awaiting the restoration of the usual benefits which would follow as a preliminary to new and greater blessings, and, on the other hand, the Irregulars, who had fought with the Sinn Fein Army for a republic and the break-up of the old regime and had sworn to take nothing less, the new Government had indeed a hard card to play.

But when the Ministers charged with this task had also to fortify themselves against a disloyal section of the army, which was seeking under the incitement of fanatics to destroy the victory won and to pursue a wrecking policy of pure Bolshevism, their troubles and responsibilities were doubled, and it may be there was some foreshadowing of this in the grave and anxious faces of the men who sat round the table at Dublin Castle on the day of their victory.

The story of the split in the Sinn Fein Republican ranks after the treaty had been made is of too recent occurrence to need narration here. The difference between a republic and the form of government which the treaty has secured lies in phraseology rather than in the actual administrative relations between England and Ireland. For, in truth, Ireland has shaken off England completely, and there is no use blinking the fact. The disaffected Republicans are fully cognizant of it, but the attractiveness of being above the law and of being able to rob, burn, and murder is irresistible, and, even if a republic were conceded in name as well as in fact, it is probable

that these irreconcilables would find some other excuse for continuing their campaign.

How long it will take the Free State to restore order it is difficult to say. They handled the Irregulars too tenderly at first, and in the engagements when the Free State troops met the rebels they evidently fired over each other's heads. They were old comrades in arms who, when united against the British forces, had fought side by side, and they were no doubt reluctant to kill each other when the civil war began, and so the expenditure of ammunition was perfectly astounding as compared with the casualties which occurred. I remember there was a very hot engagement with a large number of men on both sides near where I lived, and when it was over there was a small crowd of local sympathizers standing round a furiously indignant Free State soldier who declared that one of the Irregulars, whom he knew well, during the engagement had deliberately taken aim and fired at him. Boiling with rage, he declared that two could play at that game and the next time he found himself face to face with Mr. Murphy in a battle that gentleman had better look out for himself, as he would let daylight into him as sure as eggs were eggs. This feeling of sparing the foe died out much more rapidly with the Irregulars than with the Free State troops, and ambushes were later marked by real enmity and a genuine desire to kill.

To show their disregard of the welfare of the country, one need not look beyond the burning of the Recess Hotel. This hotel, in the heart of

Connemara, was the headquarters of the rich people that come over for the salmon fishing at Ballynahinch. They employed an army of native gillies and boatmen and car-drivers, whose earnings alone enabled them to subsist on their small holdings during the winter. The hotel was also the central attraction for tourists from England and America, and it was so well run that all through the season there was a stream of people coming into Connemara encouraging local industry, buying the frieze made by the people, their lace and knitting and crochet work, and spending their holiday savings freely. All this is a thing of the past, for it is very unlikely that the Midland Railway Company will rebuild the Recess Hotel again, and the Irregulars have now to their charge the fact that they have ruined the people of Connemara.

CHAPTER XLII

A FINAL LOOK ROUND

I HAVE at last caught time by the heel, and, so far as the memories of the past are concerned, my story ends. As to the future it is unwise to make prophecies with things as they are, and who can tell whether the present internecine warfare is to end in the rise or fall of Ireland?

It has been interesting to watch Ireland's fight for self-government, and to have seen, from time to time, the hopes of it flare up and vanish like summer lightning. Twice we have seen the country within measurable distance of it; twice after its defeat in Parliament it has been thought to be dead, as no English party would be likely to wreck itself in taking up a lost cause. And now that the English Government, bag and baggage, have been cleared out of the country, and the people have won to a fuller measure of Home Rule than they ever dared to hope for, they are able to realize how different their dreams and anticipations of it are from the awful reality.

Stephen Gwynn, writing in the *Observer* on December 10, 1922, tells how bonfires lit up the hills of Ireland to the uttermost parts of the West when Redmond's Home Rule Act of 1914 was passed, and he contrasts this with the declaration conferring on the country the far greater measure of inde-

pendence which was received by a silent and depressed city on December 6, 1922. No concourse of people anywhere, no flags, no jubilations, the crowds which had surged rejoicing through the streets a year ago, when the Irish representatives provisionally took over the government of the country from Lord Fitz-Alan, were conspicuous by their absence now that the final act and deed was delivered which made permanent the severance of Ireland from England under the treaty.

It was not that a change had come over their desires. It was sorrow and disappointment and fears for the future which kept the people silent on the dawn of the nation's hopes. The treaty had secured at first the complete fulfilment of the romantic vision symbolized by the sun rising in a mist of golden glory behind the old Parliament House in College Green. It was a glorious dream—but what of the reality? The uprising of the wreckers, a terrified people, crouching fearfully at night round the fires in their darkened homes, unarmed and unprotected, and listening for the steps outside and the knock at the door; the terror-stricken cry from within of "Here they are!" as the gang of assassins break into the house and the men are brought outside to be shot, or the women called upon to submit to outrage to save their lives. That is how the prayers have been answered —the people have gained Home Rule, and, so far, it has brought them nothing but misery and utter despair. Their old light-hearted friendliness has

gone; never again shall we see the type of simple, kindly, superstitious, God-fearing old peasants who were as much a characteristic feature of Ireland as the mountains, lakes, and green fields amidst which they dwelt. The protection of the clergy they have found to be a broken reed to depend upon; if the clergy could have taken a stronger line against crime and terrorism than they did at the beginning of the trouble, they might possibly have maintained their influence for good, but now encyclicals and pastorals might shower down like snowflakes without diverting the Irregulars a hair's breadth from their fiendish cruelties.

The old people as we knew them before the war are scarcely to be recognized in the suspicious, oppressed, and affrighted folk one meets on the country roads nowadays, half afraid to throw a glance in the direction of passing strangers. While as for the militant younger men, greed, blood lust, and vice have transfigured them, and the clergy know very well that even their cloth would be no protection to them if they should cross the path of the Irregulars.

The old conversational way of haranguing the young men from the altar and keeping them up to their religious duties, how futile it would seem in these times! I remember before the war an English Catholic tourist coming into the hotel where I was staying and being very much taken with the address of the curate to some young men and boys who could not all find room inside the church, and were accustomed to kneel outside.

"Now you young fellows," he said, "that are

lettin' on to be at your prayers, outside, I know what ye're up to—I know a good deal more than you think. You're going off and playing ball, that's what you're doing. D'ye know what'll happen to ye if ye go off playing ball before Mass is over? Well, I'll tell ye, yez'll all go to Hell, and won't that be *a very nice thing!*"

Nowadays, these young men would all have loaded revolvers in their pockets, and a curate who ventured to harangue them in a menacing way on any subject would be given a strong hint that it would be more healthy for him to mind his own business.

There was nothing unusual in this form of harangue. The clergy in the old days knew the mentality of their congregations so well that the way they talked down to their level to impress on them the moral lesson they desired to impart was very striking. A D.I. in Donegal told me of a sermon he heard which illustrates this. The priest was speaking of the betrayal of Christ by Judas Iscariot. "Thirty pieces of silver," he said, "think of it. Think of the horror of betraying the Saviour for the greed of a paltry sum of money. Just thirty pieces of silver!" Finding his congregation were not properly stirred he brought it home in this way. "Think of it, the price of a second-hand bicycle!" This found its mark, and a deep groan of shame from every heart filled the church!

The I.R.A., while shaking off the control of the clergy, thought it well to be on the safe side with the Almighty so far as attending Mass was concerned, and it was disclosed at the inquest of the man who

tried to assassinate Lord French and was shot in the attempt, that he went to Mass in the morning and from that to the place of the ambush. But their behaviour in church was often truculent and unseemly. A priest I know in the West told me that a Republican attending Mass in his church, seeing the sergeant of the R.I.C.—a very devout man—bent in prayer, went up behind him, and in face of the congregation chalked on his broad back the words "Up the Republic." The sergeant, in the fervour of his devotions, remained motionless, but this sacrilege in the House of God was too much for "ould Molly Carolan," who hobbled up the church and dusted it off with her shawl. The priest didn't hear of it till next day, and then, as he put it to me, he "skinned the ruffian from the altar" on the following Sunday for his attempted desecration of the Sabbath. But the sergeant's demeanour on the occasion was a lesson to all, and the people said it was plain that "ould Molly Carolan" got her inspiration straight from Heaven "to dust the sergeant's coat," and "there was nothing like the Hand of God after all."

I commenced this book in August, 1922, when I was driven from home by the Irregulars, as I thought it would be a pleasant occupation for the long winter evenings. I hoped and believed by the time the last chapter came to be written it would tell how goodwill and brotherly love had entered into the hearts of the people and how the long strife had ended at last.

But writing now my last chapter this first week of the new year at my temporary home in England,

where all is peace and security, I find that the Irish paper which reaches me tells the same heart-breaking tale of ambushes, shootings, the burning of historic Irish mansions, raids, and wrecking of trains.

Meanwhile, Irishmen of position and education, who love their country and have spent their time and money in it, have been driven out and dare not return to their homes, and in many cases cannot do so, as their homes are blackened ruins. Thus the Free State Government is hampered by the loss of revenue, the country is poorer by the money spent elsewhere, and in addition to the loss of revenue the ratepayer is saddled with an enormous liability in respect of malicious injuries and property destroyed. Cosgrave and his Ministers are showing grit and statesmanship, and will leave no stone unturned to create a state of peace and goodwill which will be their defence and extenuation for all that has led up to the Treaty, but the financial burden on the country on account of the wanton destruction by the rebels is a terrible handicap, and one wonders what will be the outcome of it all. So far as the fight of the rebels is concerned, I think the Free State Government must ultimately succeed, as the country is on their side, but I am afraid that the partition of Ireland is their greatest obstacle to peace, as it is a bar to the fulfilment of the hope of an Irish nation. Any attempt to compel the North by force to come into the Dublin Parliament would lead to a recrudescence of boycotting, murder, and reprisals. Ulster, I believe, could only be induced to come in voluntarily if it could be shown that it

would be financially advantageous to her to do so. But it is hard to see how it can ever be financially advantageous for a province to link its fortunes with another province divided against itself, with all its resources wasted in civil war, and with its wealthiest citizens exiled. No one can say that the Irregulars have achieved nothing permanent, for they have stabilized the partition of Ireland, and have proved to be Ulster's strongest allies in its determination to maintain a separate government for the North.

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